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THE

Letters of Horace Walpole

VOLUME VII.

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THE LETTERS

OF

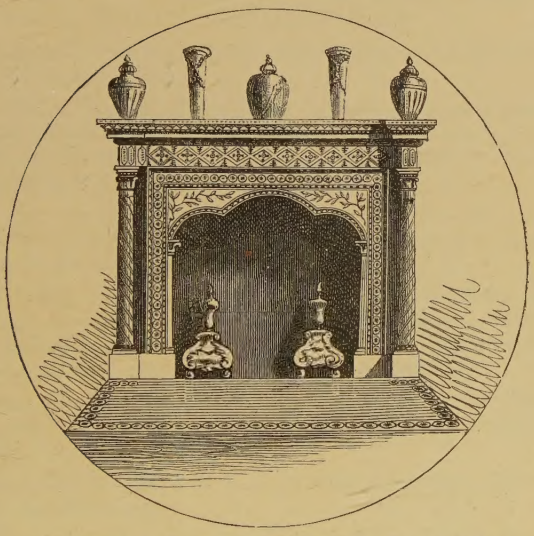
HORACE WALPOLE

FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

EDITED BY

PETER CUNNINGHAM

Now First Chronologically Arranged



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THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

1690. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Nov. 6, 1777.

Your Ladyship will be so well content with knowing that nothing ill happened to Mr. Fitzpatrick,[1] in a battle of three days, that you

[1] It may be interesting to hear what this gallant soldier, accomplished gentleman, and politician at the same time, himself felt on the subject of this war. I therefore insert a few letters written feelingly and familiarly to his sister-in-law, Lady Ossory, about this time.

New York, June 2, 1777.

My dear Lady Ossory,—I have only just time to write this, to let you know that we landed here on the 27th of May, after a passage of little more than eight weeks, during which I was perfectly well in health, but *ennuyé* to a degree not to be conceived by anybody who is not on board a ship, which of all miseries is really the most insupportable. We are in the utmost hurry and confusion, being ordered to join the rest of the army immediately at Brunswick, a town about forty miles from this, and I shall leave the letter for the packet, which they say will sail in a few days: I fancy it will wait only till the army has taken the field. You cannot imagine anything half so beautiful as this country: it is impossible to conceive anything so delightful. Lady Holland (in spite of her politics) would, I am sure, feel for it, if she could see the ruin and desolation we have introduced into the most beautiful, and I believe, once the happiest part of the universe.

Pray be so good as to tell her, I shall write to her by the next opportunity; but we are now really so hurried, that I have scarce a moment to spare. For politics, I refer my brother to a letter I have written to Charles, whom I wish he would caution not to exhibit it everywhere, for many reasons. I hope you will be charitable enough to write to me as often as you can, and make all my friends do the same: in my situation any news is acceptable, and in all situations hearing from those we love, is pleasant. I have just seen Lord Chewton, who is grown thin, but looks very well: he desires to send his respects, and is most extremely impatient to pay you them in person—indeed, everybody seems most heartily tired of this business, which is in reality one of the most disagreeable scenes altogether that can be imagined; the only merit of it

will not repine at his having gathered no laurels in them. He really was not engaged any one of the three days, nor Lord Chewton

is, that it is new to us, and that it is certainly one of the most extraordinary things that ever one could have been witness to since the creation of the world. If I thought I should continue here till the *dénouement de la pièce*, I should have a very distant prospect to look forward to, indeed: and yet I do not know that I have any reason to flatter myself that I shall not.

I am not surprised at the great aversion people have in general to the inhabitants of this part of the globe: their manners are so different from our own, and so far from everything that is pleasing or agreeable, that as far as I can judge from the few I have seen, and which I am assured are a very just type of the whole, they are to us certainly the most unpleasant, formal, precise, disagreeable people in the world, yet they are exactly what I had always supposed them. But I do not see that this is a sufficient reason for extirpating the whole race, which seems now generally understood to be our object. The difficulty of accomplishing this desirable purpose seems the only objection people here have to it; and we are perpetually exclaiming against the people for being so unjust as to hate and detest us cordially, and so very cruel as to do us every kind of mischief and injury that they can! Adieu, my dear Lady Ossory! I am very impatient to hear from you, and flatter myself you will be good enough not to forget me. Yours, most affectionately,

R. F.

Pray give my love to all my friends at Ampthill, where I suppose you now are, and present *mes respects à Madame la Duchesse votre voisine.*

New York, July 12, 1777.

A MILLION of thanks to you, my dear Lady Ossory, for the very kind and charming letter you were so good as to send me by Lord Rawdon. Among many which I received from my friends, this was the only one that was at all comfortable, as they all seemed to depend upon one another for having sent all the news that was stirring, and by that means, sent me hardly any. A letter from you to me can never require an apology of any sort, whatever the contents may be; but if you could conceive what a treasure I consider it, and what a value everything has which proves that, at this distance, one is still remembered by the persons one loves, you could never for a moment fancy that I could think your letter uninteresting. Give me leave, therefore, to thank you most sincerely and cordially for it, as well as for the many other instances of your goodness to me, which have, I assure you, made too deep impression upon me ever to allow me to forget them. But sincerely I hope you never will suppose a letter, whatever it may contain, can fail of being acceptable news—scandal, or anything in the world—though, I confess, I think the *Citron's* scandal is so much her own, and so little to be depended upon, that as she can never know whether the histories she deals out are really the current scandal of the town, or merely the fruits of her own pretty imagination; and if they are the latter, I confess I feel very little curiosity about them. I dare say you will think I say this because I dislike the thing she said of a person's partiality for one of her nephews, but I assure you that is not the case; for if I was *dans le cas* to dislike it, I should not believe it a bit the more from her saying it, especially as I know she said the same thing of the same person, with regard to another of her nephews, without the least foundation in the world. Anything certainly is good to fill a letter from Europe to America, but excepting politics, you must confess that it is impossible that America should be able to furnish any materials whatever. If I were to give you an account of my life, it would be only an unintelligible jargon of military nonsense; and if I were to overflow the paper with my thoughts, they are of a kind that could only serve to give you *des vapeurs*; for, to tell you the truth, nothing in the world can be so disagreeable and so odious to me, as being obliged to serve in this execrable war, exclusive of

neither; not that the latter was ill, or less from want of spirit in your *beau-frère;* but as neither of them have any *fanfaronade* about them,

the *désagrément* of being banished from society, and cut off from all those connexions and friendships, without which *la vie humaine* has not much left to recommend it. But if I continue in this style, I perceive I shall immediately do the very thing I was declaring I would avoid: I must therefore endeavour to change the subject.

I am astonished at the news of La Fayette: I dare say he will be much admired for his project in France, whatever Lord Clermont may say. We are here preparing to embark, to my great sorrow, for the sea is my aversion; and a crowd of officers in a transport in this hot climate will not contribute much to make it less disagreeable. Our destination is unknown to us; people in general seem afraid of its being southward, dreading the heat of the weather. I am very indifferent as to that myself, as I find very little inconvenience from heat. We have had here already some days far hotter than any I have ever felt, and I do not find the climate disagree with me at all, as I never was in better health in my life. I am much obliged to Mr. Walpole for the honour of his *souvenir*, and beg you will make my acknowledgments. Adieu, my dear Lady Ossory. The finishing of a letter at this immense distance has a kind of resemblance to taking leave, which gives a very unpleasant sensation, *mais enfin il faut finir*. Adieu. I flatter myself I need not say how sincerely and affectionately I am yours,

R. F.

Camp, near the head of Elk River, Maryland, September 1.

The most unfortunate accident in the world, my dear Lady Ossory, prevented me sending my letters by the last packet, and I was obliged to trust them to the conveyance of a man I never saw, when I left New York; so God knows if ever they have been received, as I got none from England by the packet which arrived a few days ago. I flatter myself I have some *en chemin*, but perhaps it may be long before I get them. We have had a most tedious voyage from New York to this part of the continent, where we have found no enemy to trouble us hitherto, as our antagonists have very wisely adopted a system of avoiding fighting. I flatter myself the persons who are so good as to interest themselves about me, have no great reason to be apprehensive for me, for the climate, though reckoned unhealthy, is very much otherwise with regard to me. I have not written to my brother, as the packet is not the best method of conveying politics, and this packet literally can contain no news of any consequence. "*La saison s'avance et nous n'avançons guères;*" but the thing is no longer worth mentioning now, for there can be but one opinion upon the subject, and I think it amounts very near to a demonstration; *en attendant*, the scene we are witnesses to is the most vile and execrable that can be conceived. A soldier of ours was yesterday taken by the enemy beyond our lines, who had chopped off an unfortunate woman's fingers in order to plunder her of her rings. I really think the return of this army to England is to be dreaded by the peaceable inhabitants, and will occasion a prodigious increase of business for Sir J. Fielding and Jack Ketch: I am sure the office of the latter can never find more deserving objects for its exercise.

Lord Chewton was very ill during our voyage, and is yet hardly recovered: his good nature is heartily disgusted at these scenes of iniquity and horror, and he is impatient for the winter, when he will probably return to England with Lord Cornwallis. I intended writing to Lady Holland, but as the packet is to be made up to-day I am afraid I shall not have time: I beg you will give my love to her, and assure her I will write to her by the next opportunity.

A letter from America containing no news of the war will appear rather an extraordinary thing, but the present situation of it is so little changed from what the last accounts carried, that there is really scarce anything worth mentioning. As to our conjectures, they are not worth much, for the maps give us very inaccurate accounts of the country, and our spies (if we have any) give us very little intelligence

they did not hot-headedly thrust themselves into more danger than their companions; and as General Washington was so easily beaten

of our enemy: we heard different stories every moment, but none to be depended upon. General Washington dined here with a great attendance of officers two days before our arrival, and is now supposed to be between this and Philadelphia, which is about sixty miles from this place. The inhabitants are almost all fled from their houses, and have driven their cattle with them; so we do not live very luxuriously, though in a country that has every appearance of plenty, and is more beautiful than can be conceived, wherever the woods are at all cleared. Adieu, my dear Lady Ossory. Pray remember me to my sisters and my nieces, and let me hear from you as often as I can. Yours most sincerely and affectionately,

R. F.

DEAR LADY OSSORY,— *Philadelphia, Oct.* 26, 1777.

From the very long time that we have not been heard of by our friends in Europe, they will certainly either totally forget that we exist, or perhaps conclude that we do really exist no longer; but as I flatter myself the first is not so, I likewise flatter myself that you will be glad to hear that the latter is not the case: in short, I am alive and well, and happy to have at last an opportunity of thanking you for your kindness to a *malheureux exilé*. I shall not trouble you with politics or a history of the campaign, for which, if you have any curiosity, I must refer you to others of my correspondents, or to the Gazette if you please, though I question if the last will reveal the whole truth of the melancholy posture of our affairs in this part of the world. I should be very unlucky if I had changed my sentiments upon these subjects at present, as the Duchess of B. has been erroneously informed, for I should have the mortification of finding everything going from bad to worse every moment. We arrived at this place above a month since, though we cannot possibly be said to be in possession of it yet, as the ships cannot get up the river, and, in spite of all their and our exertions, do not seem more likely to succeed in that object than they were three days after our arrival.

I cannot say much for the town of Philadelphia, which has no view but the straightness and uniformity of the streets. Till we arrived, I believe it was a very populous city, but at present it is very thinly inhabited, and that only by the *canaille* and the Quakers, whose peaceable disposition has prevented their taking up arms, and consequently has engaged them in our interests, by drawing upon them the displeasure of their countrymen. If what we hear of General Burgoyne's *situation* be true, and that he and his whole army are literally prisoners, I think neither the war nor the Ministry can possibly last another campaign. A few days after our battle at the Brandy-wine, a surgeon, who came from the enemy to dress the wounded Americans who had fallen into our hands, brought me a very kind message from Monsieur de la Fayette. He had been wounded himself in the action, and sent to inquire after me particularly, because it had happened that we had literally been opposite to each other in the engagement. Our danger, however, had been very inconsiderable, as it happened luckily for us that the enemy made less resistance where we attacked than in any other part of the battle. The consequences of this victory have been exactly like those of the others. In short, it is really melancholy to see so much misery occasioned, and so many troops sacrificed every day to so little purpose.

I am much obliged to you for the hint you gave me upon the subject of my leisure hours, and for the future am determined to follow your advice. I am in hopes of seeing you this winter: have you had a presentiment upon the subject? You know they are always infallible. Lord Lindsey is arrived here, but his *ton* is too bad even for this part of the world, and nobody can bear him. Sir John W. informs me that *notre chère tante* Lady G. is very ill, which her nephews on this side the Atlantic seem not much to care about. An unfortunate accident has happened here: Captain Tollemache is killed in a duel by a wrongheaded officer in the Guards, a Mr.

without a stroke being struck, Mr. Fitzpatrick and Lord Chewton could not acquire more honour than General Howe himself, who has been presented with a victory that he has not earned, and of which he probably will not hear this month.

In short, not only no confirmation is come of the New York Gazette, but the Ministers say they have traced the two ships that brought the news to Liverpool and Glasgow, and have discovered

Pennington, whom he brought over in his ship. As it happened at New York, we do not know the particulars, but everybody concludes the latter to have been in the wrong, from his general character. I cannot help pitying Lady Bridget, though she is a detestable woman. I am quite of your opinion with regard to the poetry you sent me, and lament that the Duchess of D.'s panegyrist is so inferior to the satirist; but unfortunately that is commonly the case. The packet is to be ready to sail to-morrow, and our letters must be sent immediately. Adieu, *ma chère sœur!* I beg you will thank Car[1] for the very kind letter she wrote me, which I would certainly have answered, if I had had notice of the packet's sailing sooner; but I really now have not time. Pray desire her to say the same from me to Lady W. the first time she writes, and tell Louisa that, though I cannot wonder at her refusing Mr. H., I beg she will leave off that foolish practice. Adieu, dear Lady Ossory. Yours most affectionately, R. F.

My love to Anne.

DEAR LADY OSSORY,— *Philadelphia, March* 3, 1778.

I sit down to write you a very short letter, just to return you a thousand thanks for those you have been so good as to write to me; but, from the last I wrote, I am sure you cannot expect any entertainment from this place, which is not become more lively since the last account I sent you of it. I am much obliged to you, too, for Mr. W.'s letter, who you say is quite wild, which I am sure he cannot be more than I am, upon the subject of politics. *J'enrage quand j'y pense.* I shall have, however, soon the satisfaction of being delivered from the most disagreeable situation I was ever in, as well as the happiness of seeing you again. My brother will inform you *que mon parti est pris,* and I flatter myself that both he and you will think I am in the right.

We are all astonished here at Lord Waldegrave's being so punctilious; I am sorry for it, because I am afraid it will be an additional pretence for starving poor Chewton. Sir John W. has got the King's leave to go to England, but I am afraid he thinks it too late to set out and to return for the next campaign, which I, as well as the whole army, am very sorry for, as he is the *fléau* and *ennui* of all his acquaintance. I hope the revival of the Citron's flame gives a good turn at least to her politics. Your patience, I am afraid, will be worn out; but at last you may depend upon it the event will justify our opinions, and will end in the utter confusion of the Ministers, and, I am really afraid, in the utter destruction of the country: the first, however, I shall sincerely rejoice at, and it will be some consolation not to have been instrumental in the last. It is ridiculous to send so short a letter from this part of the globe, *mais que voulez-vous,* and while we vegetate in this place nothing can be expected. This is certainly the last letter I shall bore you with from it, and therefore I beg you will forgive the dulness of it, and believe me, my dear Lady Ossory, yours most truly and sincerely, R. F.

Pray give my love to Anne and Gertrude, since she is so gracious as to accept of it. —R. VERNON SMITH.

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[1] Miss Vernon, afterwards Mrs. Robert Percy Smith, and the mother of the Right Hon. Robert Vernon Smith.—CUNNINGHAM.

that they were sent by Panchaud on some stock-jobbing errand. If this is true, they have good reason to be peevish, for never were people more egregiously duped. I have not time to say more now, but I am happy to take off some anxiety from Ampthill.

1691. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Nov. 7, 1777.

You will have seen in the papers, before you can receive this, such accounts of a total defeat of Washington, that you might wonder at my silence if I did not say a word: that word must be, that I very much doubt the fact; and, if it was known at New York so long ago as the supposed Gazette thence says, it would be wonderful, indeed, that General Howe should keep it a profound secret from the Government here, whom he might suppose a little interested to hear some good news or other after a long dearth.

The first breath of this report was said to come from France yesterday sevennight. On Sunday morning early it was asserted as a fact by a New York Gazette arrived at Liverpool. On Tuesday I came to town, intending to write to you; but, finding no confirmation come, I thought it prudent not to assert what I knew no better. From Tuesday to Friday night is a long interval on such an occasion; and, though some still say that they believe Washington beaten, they do not use, I observe, much stronger terms than *received a check*. One has heard of towns burnt to the ground, that have turned out to be a chimney on fire. In the mean time I tell you all I know, and I am not apt to believe more of things at such a distance.

Of what there is no doubt is, *the check* Burgoyne *has received*, and the distress of his army, that the last accounts left in danger of being starved. There have been accounts of his recovering the blow, but I cannot find one person who believes that. In one word, it is a very serious moment; and, without greater views, the misery of so many who have relations and friends both in Howe's and Burgoyne's armies is terrible. It is known that the latter had twenty-six officers wounded; and as their names are not come, ten times the number may be suffering the worst anxiety. The distance of the war augments its horrors almost as much as its expense, and makes it grow every day more irksome.

I have no private news to send you of any sort. The town is still

empty. I come now and then to see the Duke and Duchess. He does not recover of his lameness, and in general I find people think he looks worse than it appears to me. She looks infinitely better than at her arrival, but *she* has a perfect constitution.

I see no prospect of an end to this American war, but from our inability to carry it on: and what can that produce but a war *from* France—I don't say *with* France; for where can we attack them if we lose America; and where are we to be attacked but in our own islands and the East Indies—which are not quite near enough to assist each other? There is no looking towards such a prospect.

If Burgoyne's army is destroyed, little force left in Canada, only seven thousand men in New York, Howe's army not increased by his tedious voyage, and three battles with Washington, if true—where are we to stamp and conjure up new armies? And what will less armies achieve, which such large ones have not compassed in three campaigns? We have lost Boston, have got New York, and perhaps Philadelphia. If the Americans have fought, they will fight. If they have not, can you make them? And can you conquer them without beating them? Can you maintain the country when you have conquered it? Will a destroyed country maintain your army? And can this country maintain or recruit it, when you can already get no recruits but from Germany? We are like Lord Holland paying the debts of his sons; he ruined himself, and left them beggars.

1692. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Nov. 13, 1777.

I HAVE had nothing to add to my accounts, Madam, nor have now more than you will see in the papers.

There is come in a ship from Halifax, which is not next door to Philadelphia, the captain of which was told by another captain from New York, that Sir W. Howe had had an engagement with Washington, and had the advantage; Washington having lost, some say, fifteen hundred men—some five hundred men. But the singular part of this story is, that captain of captains says the action passed on the 25th, and not the 11th, which does not prove that the New York Gazette of the 29th was very authentic. In short, it is the House that Jack built, except that it loses a story in the hands of every new builder. Nobody knows what to make of such a cloud,

which has occasioned as much reasoning, and consequently as much false reasoning as ever was heard.

What is believed is, that Captain Tollemache, Lady Bridget's husband, is killed in a duel at New York, by a Captain Pennington, on a foolish quarrel about humming a tune. There is strange fatality attends the House of Tollemache: two brothers drowned and a third killed! My poor niece, Lady Dysart, who is all goodness and good-nature, will be very unhappy, as she was about the last brother! But indeed if she can love the eldest, it would not be just to be indifferent to the others; though, except the second, I never heard much good of any of them. I know which is the worst.

I have seen George twice since his return from Ampthill. You have done him a great deal of good; he was in spirits yesterday; this morning there was a little relapse. He is gone, I believe, to Lady Holland, but returns to-morrow, as his mother is come to town not in a good way.

I hope you saw and was delighted with the parody of Burgoyne's Despatch. I never saw more humour, nor better kept up. It is as much admired as it deserves. General Swagger is said to be entrenched at Saratoga, but I question whether he will be left at leisure to continue his Commentaries: one Arnold is mighty apt to interrupt him.

Thursday morning.

I AM come to town to take possession of Berkeley Square; and your Ladyship's letter of the 9th, which, N.B., I received *but* yesterday, gives me great hopes of finding you in town. How happy I shall be if you are, and that I may catch a glimpse of you after dinner!

Your Ladyship is most obliging, and I will let the Strawberries know the honour you intended them, but alas! they go into Yorkshire on Wednesday for two months. *I* shall be quite content with the party already named of yourselves, your two lady daughters, and Mr. Selwyn. You have all seen how likely I am to tumble on my nose, and therefore I shall not be ashamed if I do; but I do not wish for more witnesses; and as I cannot stand to show my house, you will be so good as to excuse my sitting; and I should grow confused if I had new honours to do, and could not perform them.

If it is possible that Madame d'Andelot should know that there is

such an antediluvian as I remaining, why would not your Ladyship be so good as to say, that Strulbrugs are dispensed with from making visits? If I must, I must: so the first dark night, I will order my coffin and pair, and *appear* to her.

I want to ask when your Ladyship will do me the honour to dine in my burying-ground; but till I have been at the Princess's to-night, I do not know when I shall be at liberty to take up my bed and walk. I wish it might be this day se'nnight, but I will send to your Ladyship to-morrow morning and settle it.

Tuesday night.

I was excessively mortified, Madam, when I found I had kept your Ladyship so inconveniently from going to Lady Ravensworth's. Indeed, by Lord Palmerston's staying, I had concluded you were not going out, and having seen so very little of you this year, I was glad to indulge myself. I am sure you are good enough to excuse so involuntary a fault.

Your purse is so pretty, that I should like it, if it had no superior merit; it has no rival in my estimation but another work of the same fingers, your Ladyship's kind note. When written to such a decrepit skeleton, I should think it mere charity, had you not always been too partial to me. Still it is pleasant, when one has outlived one's self, not to have survived the kindness of one's friends; and I will not think that age and pain are terrible evils, when they have neither shaken your friendship, Madam, nor weakened my memory of the gratitude I owe you.

I was very ill, Madam, after I left your Ladyship, and I am well again, without having done anything to occasion either. I only mention this to show you that my disorders are of no consequence, nor worth minding; and therefore, good as you are, I do beg of you to take no notice of them, for it makes me appear very ridiculous to myself, as I can give no account of what is the matter with me. It will indeed oblige me seriously, if you will never say anything about it, for if it is fancy, I do not desire to be indulged in it.

I wish your Ladyship joy on last night's victory; General Conway has just been here in great spirits and told me of it.

Thursday.

I cannot think of going to the play to-night, Madam; nor can be out of the way of hearing the first news that shall come. I have done what was right; I approved and applauded Mr. Conway's

going instantly; but I cannot pretend to be easy now he is gone. My feelings for my friends are stronger and more sincere than my philosophy; and great is the difference between advising them to act as they ought, and being indifferent to the consequence.

1693. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Dec. 4, 1777.

This letter will not be preceded by nine postilions blowing horns; but should steal into Florence as modestly as a Roman general, who at most hoped to obtain the honour of an ovation. The second part of my despatch will only beg you not to despair of the republic.

After living a whole month upon a New York Gazette, and tired of asking if, *No news yet?* Sir William Howe's aid-de-camp arrived on the first: he confirmed the account of two, not three, engagements between the General and Dictator Washington. In the first, Howe certainly had the advantage; and in the second, so far, that Washington, having attacked him in his post, was repelled, and is retired into the Jerseys, the King having been restored to the sovereignty of Philadelphia. You are to believe that though Howe lost eleven hundred men, particularly Hessians, Washington suffered more: but even the Gazette does not enjoin you to suppose that the latter is totally defeated. On the contrary, for fear so small an army should effect too great things, you are authorised to figure the provincial army in the Jerseys as still consisting of 11,000 men; and there are a few reasons to think that it may now be as large as the Congress or the provinces, no longer checked, may please. Sir William delays the pursuit, as the passage of the Delaware is not yet clear. The Lord his brother is besieging a tough fort, and has already lost a sixty-four gun ship and a frigate.

General Clinton has marched to relieve or find Burgoyne, but was forced to be content with taking two forts, and showing uncommon valour. The next paragraph will tell you why his expedition was unnecessary.

On Tuesday night came news from Carleton at Quebec, which indeed had come from France earlier, announcing the total annihilation (as to America) of Burgoyne's army. Carleton declares he has no *authentic* information; but from all the intelligence he can get, and which he believes, Burgoyne, after despatching Colonel

Fraser with 1000 men to seek provisions, which whole body with their commander was cut off, fought desperately to extricate himself; but, numbers increasing and pouring upon him, he had been forced to lay down his arms, and the whole remaining army, which some say still consisted of 5000, but probably were reduced much lower, surrendered themselves prisoners, and are to be transported to England, on parole of not serving more in America—no bad circumstance for us, if they were but here? Burgoyne is said to be wounded in three places; his vanquisher Arnold is supposed to be dead of his wounds.

You may imagine this occasions some consternation; but none at all, I assure you, in the Temple of Concord. Unless Crœsus besieged the senate with an army of ingots, I do not believe there would be a deserter from the cause of *Sacra Fames*. There have been indeed warm skirmishes in both the Temples of Honour and Virtue, Lord Chatham himself heading the troops of the Opposition, but without making any impression. Lord George Germain has received several wounds from Charles Fox;[1] and Burke and Wedderburn were on the point of a closer engagement; but it was made up.[2] The Parliament is to be adjourned to-morrow till after the holidays.

What will be next, I, the most unwise of men, do not guess. Some, a little wiser, think the wisest could not tell what should be. The Opposition, who, decried as they have been, have at least not been contradicted in their prophecies by events, think that, as Canada is left defenceless, and New York is not overcrowded with defenders, the whole force of New England, which is entire, as Burgoyne experienced, may march to Quebec, or join Washington,

[1] The only brilliant part of the debate was a bitter philippic on Lord G. Germaine, by Charles Fox in his highest manner. He called him an ill-omened and inauspicious character, and, besides blaming the choice of a man pronounced unfit to serve the Crown, dwelt on his ignorance and incapacity for conducting a war. The attack was by moderate men thought too personal and too severe. It was felt in the deepest manner by Lord George, who rose in the utmost consternation and made the poorest figure. He said the man in the world whom he chose should abuse him had done so. General Conway said the next day, he was exactly of a contrary opinion. Lord North handsomely defended Lord George, and said he was glad Fox had abandoned him an old hulk to attack a man-of-war; but afterwards he perhaps hurt Lord George as much as Fox had done, for the latter coming up to the Treasury benches, Lord North said, in Lord George's hearing, "Charles, I am glad you did not fall on me to-day, for you was in full feather." *Hor. Walpole.* (MS. note in Russell's Fox, i. 158.) See also Lord Ossory to Fitzpatrick, 27 Nov. 1777, in Russell's Fox, i. 157.—Cunningham.

[2] See *Fish* Crawfurd's account of this quarrel in a letter to Lord Ossory of 4 Dec. 1777, (Russell's Fox, i. 161,) and Burke's letter to Wedderburn, of same date, in Campbell's 'Chancellors,' viii. 27.—Cunningham.

and besiege Clinton with as numerous an army as they choose to have. In that case, Sir William Howe must abandon Philadelphia, and march to the succour of New York.

You may be sure the uninformed expect that, as America is so nearly lost, the army will be recalled. You may guess, too, that I, who do not dote on France, nor desire a war at home, should not be sorry we had a little more defence; but who will ask my advice, or take it? We are, in fact, very near the end of the American war, but I doubt we are at the beginning of our troubles. Disgrace is the present chapter, and sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. If disappointment opens our eyes, it has, like a true friend, given us bitter but wholesome counsel. If obstinacy is mistaken for firmness, it will obtain at last, as it generally does, its genuine appellation.

I am sorry you are losing your nephew and Lady Lucy, and more sorry that you continue troubled with lameness. Though I am a little younger, you must trust my greater experience. The gout will bear no contradiction. You must submit to what it gives, and what it leaves. I do not walk a mile in a twelvemonth, and suffer if I stand a quarter of an hour; but what then? There are chairs for us old folks, and in this age easy ones everywhere. Within these two months, sleep, which has been my constant support and food, has begun to grow coy. Can I wonder? At first I had a mind to find a cause; but I recollected that twenty years ago I should have said to myself, if a person of sixty complained, "The poor soul does not consider it is three-score!" We must part with all at once, or see it slip away by degrees. We cannot even choose which; nor should know how to decide, if we might. I endeavour to take patiently everything as it comes. You have a better temper, and can do so more easily. The vision has been pleasant enough upon the whole to both of us. Thank God, it has been no worse! Let us, while we last, hope it will not be. If we combat age, by pretending to believe that its consequences are accidents that may be removed, we only deceive and torment ourselves, but find no remedy Adieu!

1694. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Friday night, late, Dec. 5, 1777.

Send for Lord Chatham! they had better send for General Washington, Madam,—or at least for our troops back, which would

be a little less disgraceful than having them returned on their hands. There is another express come to-day with the loss of Ticonderoga, which is very credible when there was no army left to defend it. I suppose Quebec will follow. General Howe must probably return to defend New York. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

I must own I had not sorted my feelings into different drawers, and therefore cannot one day pull out one, and grieve for burning a town, or destroying a beautiful province; and the next day take out an assortment of compassion for an army that marched under such a savage proclamation as Burgoyne's. The accounts that are come, own, that the provincials have treated him and his fellow-prisoners with the utmost humanity. On the other hand, I must contradict myself, and do justice to General Clinton, who spared all he could, when he took the two forts. We have been horribly the aggressors; and I must rejoice that the Americans are to be free, as they had a right to be, and as I am sure they have shown they deserve to be. I cannot answer for what our troops would have done, had they conquered; and less what the spirit would have done that sent them. Lord Chatham is an Irishman: he would recal the troops and deny the independence of the Americans. He is in the right to recal an army that cannot conquer it; but a country that will not be conquered, and that cannot be, is but in an odd sort of state of dependence. He seems to be afraid of their condescending even to trade with us. No, Madam, we do not want Ministers that would protract our difficulties. I look on them but as beginning now, and am far from thinking that there is any man, or set of men, able enough to extricate us. I own there are very able Englishmen left, but they happen to be on t'other side of the Atlantic. If his Majesty hopes to find them here, I doubt he will be mistaken: it is not worth his while to change hands.

The debates have continued warm in the House of Commons. Charles Fox on Wednesday told Lord George he hoped to see him brought to a second trial. Burke having called Wedderburn Lord George's counsel, Wedderburn grew outrageous, told Burke he knew not how to behave with good manners, but he would be respected by him both in public and private. Burke went out of the House, and, they say, made a signal to Wedderburn to follow him; but their friends interposed, and it was made up. Yesterday Charles and the Attorney-General had high words that did not go so far. Lord Chatham was in the other House to-day, but I know nothing of what was done.

Mr. Acland is not dead, but wounded; and his poor wife is gone to him at Saratoga, from Quebec.

I am grateful for your Ladyship's hint, and, indeed, did hope to be invited to keep my gambols at Ampthill, which I do most stedfastly design; though I was alarmed last night with a swelled finger, but it is gone; and this evening it has snowed. However, I am not in a mood to be disheartened easily; and as your Ladyship's spirits seem to be affected with every sort of wind that blows, *my propriety* shall come and represent the necessity of submission to what one wishes, and endeavour to comfort you for the loss of everybody that you don't know.

Dec. 6th.

Thank you, Madam, for the extracts, which are sensible indeed. I have time to say no more of them. Yesterday was warm again in the Lords. The Earls of Chatham and Gower squabbled again on the Indians, and the former was in the wrong again. He talked of accusing my Lord of York of his libel, and was not in the wrong. It looks as if we were to continue the war; but as it is tiresome to wait two or three months for a skirmish, we are to have a war with France, of which we can have news every day.

Pray return my compliments, Madam, to Lady Gertrude, and tell her I am impatient to kiss her, though I kissed a Princess last night that was my own flesh and blood—but is it *proper* to own so much?

P.S. Sir Charles Bunbury declared off from the Court[1] on Thursday, and Lord Northington voted in the minority yesterday. These are the *rat*ifications of misfortune.

1695. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Thursday night, Dec. 11, 1777.

I DO not write, Madam, to tell you politics; you will hear them better from Lord Ossory: nor indeed have I words to paint the abject impudent poltroonery of the Ministers, or the blockish stupidity of the Parliament.

Lord North yesterday declared he should during the recess prepare to lay before the Parliament proposals of peace to be offered to the Americans! *I trust we have force enough to bring forward an accommodation.* They were his very words. Was ever proud inso-

[1] See Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 254.—CUNNINGHAM.

lent nation sunk so low! Burke and Charles Fox told him the Administration thought of nothing but keeping their places; and so they will, and the members their pensions, and the nation its infamy. Were I Franklin, I would order the Cabinet Council to come to me at Paris with ropes about their necks, and then kick them back to St. James's.

Well, Madam, as I told Lord Ossory t'other day, I am satisfied,—Old England is safe, that is, America, whither the true English retired under Charles the First:—this is Nova Scotia, and I care not what becomes of it.

I have just been at 'Percy.'[1] The four first acts are much better than I expected, and very animated. There are good situations, and several pretty passages, but not much nature. There is a fine speech of the heroine to her father, and a strange sermon against Crusades, that ends with a description of the Saviour, who died for our sins. The last act is very ill conducted, unnatural, and obscure. Earl Douglas is a savage ruffian. Earl Percy is converted by the virtue of his mistress, and she is *love and virtue* in the supreme degree. There is a prologue and epilogue about fine ladies and fine gentlemen, and feathers and buckles, and I don't doubt every word of both Mr. Garrick's, for they are common-place, and written for the upper gallery. It was very moderately performed, but one passage against the *odious Scot* Douglas was loudly applauded, and showed that the mob have no pensions.

Our brave Administration have turned out Lord Jersey and Mr. Hopkins, which will certainly convince all America and all Europe, that they are *not* afraid; though I saw one of their tools to-day who assured me they are,—nay, he said (and *he* is somebody) that if the Congress insists on the Ministry being changed it must be. I do not believe the Congress will do them so much honour; but I answered, "Sir, if the Congress should make that condition, it will not be from caring about it, but to make the pacification impossible. I do not believe they care much more for the Opposition than for the Administration; but they must know that the Opposition could not, would not, grant terms, that this Administration should refuse."

Adieu, Madam! I am at last not sorry you have no son, and your daughters, I hope, will be married to Americans, and not in this dirty, despicable island!

[1] A tragedy, by Hannah More: first acted at Covent Garden, Dec. 10, 1777: ran nineteen nights.—CUNNINGHAM.

1696. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Dec. 17, 1777.

THERE can be nothing more amiable or more just than your Ladyship's reproof to me for forgetting your *sons*. I could excuse myself more easily to Lord Ossory than to you; and, in truth, my mind is so narrow and contracted by all I have seen and see, that those I love occupy the whole remaining space; like a small map, only the chief rivers are set down, and not all the rivulets. It was this partial humour, and not what you are pleased to dignify with the name of *proper pride*, that made me so cold to the Earl Lord Ossory found with me. I just contrive to keep within the bounds of cool civility to those I do not wish to see. Mr. Beauclerk told me t'other day he wondered I received everybody that came to see me. I told him it was very little inconvenience, for those I was not glad to see, found little encouragement to come often.

As I have no new news to send your Ladyship, for Captain Craig has only brought the confirmation of Burgoyne's capitulation, I should have deferred my apology for some days, were I not impatient to mention what interests me much, as it regards your Ladyship and our Lord. I called on Lady Holland last night, and thought she looked ill. I afterwards found Lady Payne at Lady Di's, and Mrs. Dixon, both whom I had seen with Lady Holland. They were both very uneasy about her. She has been blooded four or five times, and it was to be repeated this morning; and Lady Payne told me Dr. Warren is not quite satisfied with her case. Lady Payne wishes much to have her go abroad, but does not think she will be persuaded. In short, I promised to tell Lord Ossory her apprehensions, and I am sure he will be so good as not to take notice of my information, especially as it might alarm his sister herself. She is so delicate, that it is better to be too circumspect than the contrary.

Crawfurd is again confined with the gout, and ought to be closer confined. He has heard that Taaffe has been cured by Buzaglo, and sent for the former, who told him fairly that Buzaglo had removed his gout in four hours, but said, the operation would kill any man less strong. The remedy struck him, and he totally forgot the reasoning; and when I urged his debility, he vowed he had rather die, than have the gout. "Oh!" said I, "I shall not contest with you,

for people often contradict one till they grow determined upon points, that at first they scarce laid any stress upon; and you shall not kill yourself only to confute me"—but he will have no more patience to be boiled to death, than with the gout; and when he has simmered half an hour, he will despair, and try the next quack he hears of.

You will please to tell me when you would have me to Ampthill. I cannot well be there before the middle of next week, but from that moment I am at your Ladyship's command for what part of the holidays will be most convenient to you, and shall not engage myself anywhere else, till you have disposed of me. *Anywhere else* sounds magnificent, but really means no where but Park-place. I am too ancient to go about like morrice-dancers, to every house that is open at Christmas; nor but where they are so good as to have indulgence, and let me come away, if I feel any menaces of the gout.

1697. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Tuesday morning, Dec. 23, 1777.

I HAVE just received a very good answer to my message; Lady Holland is much better. I will call on her myself before I come to Ampthill, which I propose shall be on Friday or Saturday—but man proposes, and fog disposes. If it is as dark as to-day or last Saturday, I shall not be able to find my way. I was forced on Saturday to light a candle at eleven in the morning, in my room forwards, to read the newspapers; and it is not the breadth of a hair lighter this morning. If this Egyptian obscurity does not produce snow, I shall not mind it.

I know nothing, Madam, though we have so many affairs on our hands, that almost every sea and every wind might bring us news of our concerns. It is well we have heads so capacious and hearts so stout, as to hold all these matters, and not mind it, if the world tumbles to pieces about our ears!

I suppose you know Lady Louisa Leveson is to marry Mr. Macdonald.

I have been at another new play, 'The Roman Sacrifice.'[1] It is the old story of Junius Brutus, without a tolerable line. I went to

[1] A tragedy, by William Shirley, first acted at Drury Lane, 18 Dec. 1777, but not printed; ran *four* nights.—CUNNINGHAM.

see it, as I had never seen Henderson, and thought I could judge him better in a new part; but either the part was so bad, or he wants to copy, that I should not have found out he was at all superior to all the other actors. Upon my word I have not a syllable more to say, and am your Ladyship's, &c.

1698. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

[See also Letter 1766.] *Dec.* 27, 1777.

The misfortune has happened, Madam; the poor Bishop [of Exeter] died this morning. The Duchess is gone to Windsor to try to bring her sister to town, who insists on staying there till he is buried, and every one of their windows looks on St. George's Chapel! but I will not sadden your Ladyship with the distress I am witness to! It is impossible for me to leave them at present, or my brother. Lady Laura, who had lived a great deal with the Bishop, and loved him like a father, is as afflicted as his own children—though they have additional cause to regret him. I have been so taken up with this calamity, that I have not had a moment to call on Lady Holland, of whom I am happy to hear such good accounts. I have not time to add a word more.

1699. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Monday evening, Dec. 29, 1777.

I purpose, with your Ladyship's and Lord Ossory's good leave, to be at Ampthill on Friday, 2nd of next year. Do not stay dinner for me; I seldom get out early in the morning.

As I have seen nothing but my family these three days, I know not what has become of the world. The capture of Mud Island is very improbable, like all ship-news, especially as no account is come since.

I shall call presently on Lady Holland, and I hope to bring you a very good account of her. I have heard that she looks much better. There is to be a gallery at Bedford House for Princess Amelia on New Year's Day. I hope Lady Louisa does not return for it.

I must tell you, Madam, a charming speech of my niece, Lady Maria. A few hours after the Bishop died, the Bishop of Oxford came to my brother [Sir Edward Walpole] where she was. Her aunt, Mrs. Clements, said to her, I am afraid you are shocked at

seeing the Bishop. "No," replied she. "Not as he is a Bishop: if he had been only Dr. Butler, I should have been shocked." I assure you she says a thousand things as worthy of the *late* Lord Waldegrave.

1700. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Jan. 4, 1778.

THE period of a month is elapsed; and therefore, not to break through an ancient custom which I am not young enough to be excused violating, (though legislators often dispense themselves from observing their own laws,) I begin a letter to you, not at all foreseeing with what it is to be filled. The distance of place, and the extreme taciturnity of the Howes, must have taught you a little not to expect events from America every day. Even Burgoyne has left himself nothing to say—till he arrives. We have lived a fortnight on the capture of Mud Island, though it is far from clear that it is yet taken. If, on the contrary, New York should be retaken by the provincials—but stay, I do not know they intend it,—it has a most slender garrison, so has Quebec; but Washington may think it a shorter way of terminating the war by overwhelming the army under Howe—if he can. In truth, I am no judge of what is most for their interest—but the Congress seem to know.

You must not suppose, though I make such short work of it, that it is the *language* here to sit down, and give America for lost. The Ministers had, indeed, very nearly said so, and Lord North was to bring terms for peace after the holidays; *mais nous avons changé tout cela*, and nothing is talked of but raising regiments, and sending another army—I don't know whither, because, supposing a new army can be raised, which is a *postulatum*, it will be a little necessary to know whether we have New York, or Philadelphia, or Quebec; and though, probably, one or two of them—but I really do not know what I say, nor have I found anybody on whose sleeve I pin my faith in these affairs. We have had assertion, and prophecy, and confidence, and all have been brought to shame, and none of them are ashamed; and so I refer you to the Chapter of Accidents.

The Parliament, when it shall meet, is to go into a great inquiry, which, I conclude, will end in nothing at all, or, rather, not end. The talk of the day is, that France has signed a treaty with the provincials, and the Stocks look pale upon it; but all these rumours only fill up the chinks of time, and will be forgotten when great

events happen. By *great events* I mean foreign war and domestic calamity. We are on the high road to both. The present moment is only like the half-hour at the theatre before the play begins: the galleries are riotous, pelt the candle-snuffers, or bawl for the overture; when the curtain is drawn up, nobody thinks but of the tragedy.

We have had a great misfortune in our family: the Bishop of Exeter is dead, who married my brother's eldest daughter. She is left with four children and a very small provision indeed; but Sir Edward has acted nobly, and gives up to her an estate at Windsor of eight hundred a-year, and a house in town, and keeps her a coach. He has, indeed, been a most bountiful father, always, and has not made his children wait for his death.

Jan. 7th.

I have received yours of the 10th of last month. You will have learnt before now that the total defeat of Washington was converted into a total defeat of Burgoyne, and it is very much the opinion of the City that the American war will soon be turned into a French one; but I doubt France will stay till we have not a regiment left in the island, which you know would save a great deal of blood.

Don't trouble your head any longer about Lady Lucy's having a son; they are the happiest who have no children.

We are not content with having lost America; we shall not have an army to defend England. Why does not Mrs. Anne Pitt return? She would find most people as mad as herself.

1701. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Jan. 17, 1778.

I HAVE not written to you since you went, as I had nothing to tell you; and I write improperly now, when one is probably at the eve of having something to say, but the fish I have to fry is of another kind. Can it be true that you have an Opera coming on the stage, and that you never mentioned it to me? Had I torn Orpheus piecemeal, I could not be more unworthy of musical communication. Am I so untuneable that I must not hear airs unless I can sing them? Yes, you have written an Opera, and it is called 'Sappho,' and I suppose Mrs. Montagu is to be first woman. Lord Strafford is my authority; and yet I can scarce think you would have been so basely unfriendly; if you have, I wish your Celestinette may be broken about your ears, or that Lady Rockingham may desire a

rehearsal at our own house in the morning, and make the poet and the whole orchestra wait till nine at night.

Knapton is dying, but the promise to Sandby is superseded, *de par le Roy*, because it dates from the Duke of Grafton.

General Howe has been to take another look at Washington, and passed Eldest again. The town of Froome, concluding *Burgoyne* was a Frenchman by his name, made great rejoicings on his being taken prisoner.

I heard last night that Voltaire is dead; now one may buy his works safely, as he cannot write them over and over again.

You shall not hear a word more from me till you clear yourself about the Opera. Should it prove true, I shall never believe a syllable more about your idleness, nay shall conclude that every thing that appears is yours, and I am sure that will be full vengeance.

P.S. Pray did you write 'The Roman Sacrifice,'[1] the last new tragedy? It was detestable.

I return you the Sermon, and would not advise its being printed unless much clamoured against; when, as all objections are exaggerated, it will appear less offensive than was expected. I would certainly have the two passages on Dalrymple's History and the Sons of the Scottish Rebels softened. They should not be quite changed, as they will certainly be remembered. I would entirely omit the glance at the ladies, who are very innocent in comparison of the men of the age. I would still be more earnest for his leaving out the passage on himself. I am totally against such declarations, and can see no reason why he should not be a Bishop, when some of its worthless occupiers are gone. I think the time is coming when the Sermon will have more weight, and *as it has been preached*, it cannot be recalled. The taxes, the treaty with the Americans, and the probable imminent war with France, will make it little noticed at this moment, but by his enemies. Let them be a little silenced and dashed, and they will not care to clamour. It cannot be lost, because it has been preached; we should have a little patience, and I think it will not be necessary long.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, January 20, 1778.

PACIFY yourself, my good Sir. I have not written: I am only writing an Opera, and what I have written of it I here send you, desiring if you do not absolutely condemn both the intention and execution, to seal it up and send it to Mr. Giardini. He has already seen the whole plan, and he must now see an act to tell me whether

1702. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Jan. 24, 1778.

I RECEIVED your Act late last night, and though I have run through it but once, I am impatient not only to pardon you, but thank you. I can forgive you anything but idleness; and music, which your words always are, has charms to soothe even me. The language is so harmonious, that I think as I did of Dryden's Ode, that it will be more melodious unset than when adapted. Yet if you can rival Dryden, Giardini cannot paragon Handel. I am, I know, a most poor judge of musical composition, yet may not I ask if Giardini possesses either force or simplicity? Your Act is classic Athenian: shall it be subdi-di-di-vi-vi-vi-ded into modern Italian? but it is too late to ask that question.

I shall now mention a very few criticisms.

The language is so sweet, that my soul that loves chiaro scuro as a contrast, at least wants a little more sombre, and the place I would allot for it is Sappho's speech after the vision. The parts of Metastasio (I do not compare you down to him) that please me

it will suit his purpose. As to yourself, you know enough of the Lady's story fully to comprehend the drift of these pages which contain her catastrophe. But I know you rather want to know why I have undertaken to write an Opera, than how I have written it. But this is a long story, and relates to a little shoemaker of Aston. Mr. Stonhewer will tell you the particulars, and how my little shoemaker and this Opera become so intimately united. Now don't talk to me about the author of 'Caractacus,' and that he ought to write nothing but what is equal, if not superior to 'Caractacus.' If you prevent me from writing Operas, I'll write nothing but ballads. "Agreed, if they be political ones, as many as you please," and don't say that a grave divine turned of fifty, debases his cloth, by telling a love story. Leave that argument for the Bishops to handle. I have made up my conscience as to that matter. Besides, if the Bishops condemn me on this head, they will nevertheless admire my learning, for all the fragments of Sappho will be translated and find their place in this drama: for instance, this third act opens with one of the Δέδυκε μὲν ἀ σελάνα καὶ Πληΐαδες, &c.

Upon the whole then I recommend this poor innocent thing to your mercy as a critic, not as if it had my last hand and its last polish, yet in such a state as will admit of little improvement except in particular lines and words. About this latter I mean to be peculiarly careful, in order to make the language as soft, and consequently as fit for music as possible; for I am persuaded this matter has never yet been sufficiently attended to by the few of our poets who have written professedly for music. Pray put up the letter to Giardini, &c., in the packet before you seal it.—I shrewdly suspect some dark practice in this death of Lord Pigot: pray tell me what you hear of that matter, and of all others, for now the political as well as natural frost is thawed, dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

W. MASON.

most are his long soliloquies of accompanied recitative in last acts; they give scope to the poet, the passions, the actress, and the composer. I would not have Sappho determine at once, but struggle with love, fear, hope, despair; and when she doubts obeying the god, thunder may mark his anger, and decide her; for she obeys a dream too suddenly, though classic times may justify her more than a modern would be justified.

As you are sublime in choruses, why have you only one in an Opera,—in a Greek opera? They are simple, and yet give variety; sure a hymeneal chorus is necessary.

I have an objection, which is odd, even to the parts I have *not* seen, but you hint (by Sappho in her female dress) at her being disguised as a man in a former Act. Will not *that* be a little too characteristic, and give a handle to buffoonery in the learned part of the mob?

I have few verbal criticisms to make, though I could commend a thousand passages, particularly the two lines on Alpheus, and the exquisite first air. I am not quite pleased with *down, down, down,* as a little too artificial, and then *down* should not come in the very next line, and in a sense that is the very opposite to the former sense, and shows we express a precipitate fall and the softness of repose by the same sound.

I do not quite approve so forced an expression as *downcast tenderness,* and I cavil at

> I *feel* that full, that heart*felt* tenderness
> That blesses those who never *felt* distress,

and would rather change *heartfelt,* which has a German sound. In the second line *felt* is most sonorous.

I have literally but one more qualm. When Sappho dedicates her lyre, she says it is *far sweeter than the harp.* This methinks is too nice a distinction for a person in her situation to make, and fitter for a commentator's note than a woman on the point of destroying herself. Yes, I see another, that I have just cast my eyes on: Sappho must not utter the word *requiem;* in short, Metastasio may use such an anachronism, but Musæus must not, shall not.

I shall send the Act and the letter to Giardini, as you order, though with regret I own: for I doubt his music will not have that majestic greatness and distinctiveness that are necessary to let the words be understood. Add that our singers want more to be taught to articulate than to sing. All the women jabber; and bad as his

taste was, Beard did more justice to sense than any of our performers; for though he laid a stress on every syllable, yet at least the audience, such as were capable, could suppose the right accents. In short, I wish your Opera could be accompanied only by the lyre and the tibia.

There is no new event. The Parliament has done little or nothing, as they wait for Lord George to lead up the Blues. I have no time for details, and, in truth, I am thinking more of 'Sappho' than of the nation, and am happy when I can amuse myself with reading anything but politics, which I am sure nobody will ever read after the day they are published; but indeed who does write what is readable? I have got two more volumes of Shenstone's 'Correspondence,' and they are like all the rest, insipidity itself. Home's 'Alfred' died three days old; 'The Battle of Hastings' [by Cumberland] is to appear this evening; the child of as feeble a parent. Garrick has been *reading* plays at Althorp à la Texier, and been adored as usual; yet I do not believe he succeeded half so well in the women. He goes on writing his wretched epilogues too, for he cannot sit down with the *strulbruggism* that he had the sense to take up.

There is a Mr. Potter too, I don't know who, that has published a translation of Æschylus, and as far as I have looked is a good poet. I am sure he has taste, for in his preface he speaks like an initiate of 'Elfrida' and 'Caractacus.' I am delighted with 'Prometheus,' though I do not approve of a mad cow for first woman.

1703. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 4, 1778.

I SHALL be sorry if you depend on me for your winter provision of news; I know so little, and the papers so much, that I could only repeat their information with not half their eloquence. All last week I was confined with a great cold which I thought it impossible for me to catch, not having had a genuine one these five or six years; I mean, not more than what I call a cold when I want an excuse for not doing what I have not a mind to do; I was blooded in spite of the gout's teeth, and yet am well again.

I hear you have finished a third book of the 'Garden;' thank the Muses you seldom do anything when you have nothing to do. It seems I am to learn your deeds from second and third hands.

As I suppose you care more about authors than politicians, I shall begin with the former. 'The Battle of Hastings,'—or rather one side of it, for not a Norman appears, has been acted. I have not seen it; the accounts are a little like a charade, for they say, the first part makes one cry, the latter laugh, and the whole sleep. It will soon be gathered in due chronologic order to its predecessor 'Alfred.'

I forgot till I had filled my sheet to answer your question about Lord Pigot, and then it was not worth while to tap a new page, as the account was contradicted. It is now confirmed. I know no more than you see in the newspapers, and thence you will collect that there has been more than meets the ear.

The enigma of the day, as he has oft been, is Lord Chatham. He has quarrelled with General Rockingham on the question of independence, and in a manner declared off; yet he is expected to-day in the House of Lords to anathematise the new levies. There is much talk too of his coming into place, which I doubt; everybody must have discovered that his crutch is no magic wand, and if the lame leads the blind it is not the way of shunning a ditch. Charles Fox has tumbled old Saturn from the throne of oratory, and if he has not all the dazzling lustre, has much more of the solid materials. They say nothing ever excelled his oration against the *unfortunate Minister* [North], who was truly unfortunate that day, for had Lord George [Germaine] been present, the thunder had fallen on him. Charles's speech on Monday was as marvellous for method and memory, and was really unanswerable, for not one of the Ministers knew what to say, and so said nothing, and that silence cost them many votes. In short, the minority amounted to above an hundred and sixty, in which were several Tories. It is supposed the inquiries will be put to a violent death, which will be very weak, for the people are contented with whatever is discussed and voted, but grow impatient when their ears are stopped by force.

The new levies are like Glendower's: he can stamp and call spirits from the vasty deep; but they don't come, consequently they will not go. I fancy the American war is pretty near an end—I mean as to attempting more than keeping what remains. I don't think there will be a French war *yet*, unless we chance to go together by the ears at sea. However, it hangs by a thread.

Having now given you the quintessence of my intelligence, you see it would not have made one more letter than it does. I shall reserve a vacuum for what may pass to-day in the Lords; but

I have very rarely known a much-expected debate answer. Chance is as much mistress of Orators as of Generals; and the prepared engagements of both frequently turn out like Sir W. Howe's two *surveys* of Washington's army.

5th.

Lord Chatham did not appear: they say, he has the gout, but I suppose not so bad but he could hobble to the end of the Park [the Queen's House] if he was much intreated. I have heard of nothing particular that passed in either House, but have seen nobody that was in either; in good truth I am little curious about debates. The ruin has gone a great deal too far to make Parliament of any consequence; speakers may amuse themselves with filling up the interstices of events, but when a house is falling, does one care who painted the staircase? Yes, Lord Chatham does. Because he once raised the building a story higher, he thinks he could do as much when the foundations have given way. Adieu! I long to see your 'Garden.' I am forced to read the newspapers, or my eyes would starve, yet it is feeding them with offals.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Feb. 6, 1778.

I KNOW thee, and the wickedness of thy heart! You would have my Opera turned into a Tragedy. I know the speech of Sappho would be much better if turned as you would have it. But if three drops of cold water which had never been mixed with the unchaste wave of Alphæus is not a sufficient cure for the most outrageous love that ever was, there is no faith in mythology; all the rest of your criticism I submit to, and kiss the rod: I even will expunge the line about the harp, though it is a verbatim translation of a fragment of Sappho.

As to Giardini, look you, if I did not think better of him than I do of Handel, my little shoemaker would not have had the benefit he will have (I hope) from this labour of my brain. Let Handel's music vibrate on the tough drum of royal ears; I am for none of it.

However, as I am now fully employed in writing a Fast Sermon for York Minster, music and operas must be lain by for a season. I hope, however, you have sent the Act to Giardini, otherwise he will think I have cheated him.

Will you be at 'Elfrida' on Saturday night, and will you clap like a dragon? I have taken more pains in fitting it for the stage, than I did about 'Caractacus.' On Wednesday I go to York; pray remember *to direct to York*, to yours

Most faithfully,

W. MASON.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Feb. 8, 1778.

I AM much obliged to you for your letter received to-day. Your news about the 'English Garden' has been told you as imperfectly as that of the Opera. It is far from finished, and not even fit for anybody's inspection at present; when it is, you shall hear more from me. I now write to tell you a story which I think I have told you before, but which the debate which I read in the papers about Lord Abingdon's motion, makes me think ought to be more public. In 1745, when the rebels were at Derby, and subscriptions were going on in London, a certain (then) Barrister[2] at

[2] Lord Mansfield.—CUNNINGHAM.

1704. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Feb. 6, 1778.

It is odd, that in the heat of a Parliamentary campaign, enlivened by a civil war, I should have nothing particular to tell you. The troops of the latter are gone into winter quarters. The others are in the field, and skirmish every day. If any of the generals are wounded, they do not own it. Some of the forces of the larger army have deserted to the enemy; and on Monday the numbers of the Opposition mounted to an hundred and sixty odd. On the other hand, it is commonly believed, that the old general of the minority, Lord Chatham, is to command the King's forces. It is certain that there is a great coolness between him and General Rockingham, but I think that disagreement so much more beneficial to the Court; and I see so little advantage to be acquired by gaining an old commander without soldiers, so fractious, so unsettled, and so impracticable, that I shall wonder much if he is invited to take the lead. It might add to the present distractions, and could cure none.

As my opinions do not always agree with the majority anywhere, it is not mine that we are on the brink of a French war. It is needless to repeat my reasons; I have told you them before.

The Duke of Gloucester has again been out of order; but not nearly so ill, I think, as some thought, or as I have seen him. He still coughs a good deal. His constitution is always alarming, and one must not trust too much to the wonderful recoveries he has had; yet perhaps frequent advertisements are not contrary, lest his youth and courage should make him presume too much.

These paragraphs are the quintessence of my letter, and it ought to end here, were it a decent quantity: yet why should one write more than one has to say? A letter tells you I am not negligent, though perhaps I grow lazy. I never was good at detailing. The event of things is all I mind; which I own does not help con-

Lincoln's Inn was called upon by a parish officer for his name, &c.; he was treated as a man should be that solicits an illegal unconstitutional subscription. The rebels retreated from Derby. The barrister flew immediately to the parish officer's house to put down his name; the P. O. was from home, had locked up the book; a blacksmith was called for to break open the bureau, and the name was inserted! This parish officer lived either in Long Acre, or Great Queen Street. This I had from good authority two years ago, and was told the fact might yet be authenticated. Adieu.

I wrote a long letter two posts ago. W. Mason.

versation. I leave you ignorant of nothing decisive. The present inquiries in Parliament into the conduct of the war I look on as a tale of a tub. The Ministers give themselves up to be teazed, more to amuse their antagonists than inform them; and the latter are pleased with making speeches. But can all this make peace, or carry on the war? Neither: but the inability of making either will produce other-guess events, and they *will* be serious.

These are my politics, which I adopt from no side, and preach to nobody. They are of not much use even to myself; for I am not of an age to trouble myself about what is to happen. When one talks of the times, one must think something; and, *isolé* as I am, it is more natural to look at the affairs of nations than at the feathers and fashions of the young, though perhaps as grave a subject. I would neither be boyish nor morose. Age, without any study on my part, has given me great indifference, and yet has been so good as to leave me spirits enough to be tranquil and to amuse myself. It is enough, not to *wish* to live or die.

1705. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 12, 1778.

I HAVE received two letters from you, one of the 6th, and another of the 8th, but not the long one you mention; for the first was but of twenty-five lines, and the latter of twenty-three, neither of which I should think a long one from anybody from whom I liked to hear at all, much less shall you pretend that one page is to pass for length; yet I conclude you have written none that I have not received. However, I answer you immediately, that you may ascertain the fact, and I wish for the future you would keep the dates of the letters you do write, long or short.

I will not talk now of the story you mention, which I not only know, but remember happening. Basta! there will be a time.

I am dismally afraid I shall not be able to go to 'Elfrida' on Saturday. My cold, that I thought gone, is worse, with the addition of a sore throat. I have not been out of my doors these two days, and as putrid sore throats are very rife, of which one of Lord Bute's daughters is dead, I am afraid of ripening mine to one. I am a little sorry you bestow your words, not only on folk that

cannot act, but on voices that cannot articulate. If 'Sappho' is to be sung, I wish it were by Italians, for from the pains they take to speak English, they pronounce more distinctly than our natives.

I sent your Act to Giardini, and wish he may make it discourse most eloquent music. His violin to be sure will make a long soliloquy; but though I like Handel, I am not bigoted. I thought Dryden's Ode more harmonious before he set it than after, yet he had expression; and I prefer Charles Fox's 'native wood notes' to Burke's feigned voice, though it goes to the highest pitch of the gamut of wit.

Apropos, his last Friday's parody[1] of Burgoyne's talk with the Indians, was the *chef d'œuvre* of wit, humour, and just satire, and almost suffocated Lord North himself with laughter; as his pathetic description of the barbarities of the Cis-atlantic army

Drew iron tears down Barré's cheek.

I wish I could give you an idea of that superlative oration. He was pressed to print it, but says he has not time during the session. How cold, how inadequate will be my fragment of a sketch from second, third, and thousandth hands; yet I must send you a bit of a daub with probably even the epithets wrong or misplaced, though each was picturesque. Well, though I can neither draw nor colour, *invenies etiam disjecta membra.* Hurlothrumbo exhorted seventeen Indian nations, who so far from understanding the Hurlothrumbic dialect, are probably almost as ignorant of English; he exhorted them by the dictates of *our* holy religion, and by their reverence for *our* constitution, to repair to his Majesty's standard. "Where was that?" said Burke: "on board Lord Dunmore's ship;"—and he exhorted them (I suppose by the same divine and human laws) not to touch the hair of the head of man, woman, or child, while living, though he was willing to deal with them for scalps of the dead, being a nice and distinguished judge between the scalp taken from a dead person and the head of a person that dies of being scalped. "Let us state this Christian exhortation and Christian injunction," said Burke, "by a more family picture. Suppose there was a riot on Tower Hill, what would the Keeper of his Majesty's Lions do? would he not fling open the dens of the wild beasts, and then address them thus?

[1] *February 6th.* Wonderful speech of Burgoyne's invitation to Indians; his wit made North, Rigby, and Ministers laugh; his pathos drew tears down Barré's cheeks. —*Horace Walpole's MS. Note in Russell's Fox,* i. 171.—CUNNINGHAM.

My gentle lions, my humane bears, my sentimental wolves, my tender-hearted hyænas, go forth; but I exhort ye, as ye are Christians and members of a civilised society, to take care not to hurt man, woman, or child, &c. &c." Barré's codicil was to threaten to paste on churches this memorable talk under the injunctions of the bishops for a Fast. Governor Johnstone said he rejoiced there were no strangers in the gallery, as Burke's speech would have excited them to tear the Ministers to pieces as they went out of the House; the Ministers are much more afraid of losing their places. Eloquence, like music, is too much improved in our days to have any of their old effects on the passions of a large audience.

Voilà a truly long letter. I leave the application to your conscience.

1706. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 18, 1778.

I HAVE two small morsels of news to tell you, and do not know which you will choose to hear first. As you cannot choose without knowing, it would be vain to wait for your answer, especially as I cannot state them without preferring one to the other. Iricisms, it is true, are not out of fashion. *Nos seigneurs* the Peers will not vote truisms to be true, lest they should betray the weakness of the nation, though those truisms, and the reason for not asserting them, are given in every newspaper, which newspapers are read in every coffee-house in Paris. *Ergo* their Lordships suppose that France supposes herself to know nothing but what appears in the votes.

As a loyal subject and freeman of Parnassus, I must believe that you interest yourself more in Heliconian affairs than in the politics of the *late* empire of Great Britain. I therefore announce to you the arrival of Voltaire at Paris. Yes; there he is. Probably *recalled from exile to raise a regiment of infidels for the defence of holy Church.*

The other event would not be worth mentioning, but for its novelty. In that light, to be sure, no parallel instance is to be found in ancient or modern history, whether Ammonite, Jewish, Chaldean, Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Roman, Constantinopolitan, Frank, French, British, Saxon, Pict, Ossianite, Mogul, Indian, or English, (all which I have examined carefully this morning to no purpose,) nay, in the tales of the fairies, in which I am still more deeply

versed, I find nothing similar. You perhaps, who have all ecclesiastical history at your fingers' ends, may recollect something approaching to the transaction of *yesterday the 17th of February*, a day of confession and humiliation, that will be remembered as long as the name of England exists. Yesterday, Feb. 17, did the whole Administration, by the mouth of their spokesman, Lord North, no, no, not resign; on the contrary, try to keep their places by a full and ample confession of all their faults, and by a still more extraordinary act,—by doing full justice both to America and to the Opposition,—by allowing that the former are no cowards nor conquerable,—that they are no Rebels, for the new Commissioners are to treat with the Congress or anybody, and, by asking pardon by effects, i. e. the cancelling all offensive acts, and by acknowledging the independence of the thirteen provinces, not *verbally* yet *virtually*. These were Lord North's words. To the Opposition full justice is done; for if the Administration has been in the wrong from beginning to end, their opponents must have been a little in the right.

The faults of the Administration, according to their own calculation, are *two:* one of being misinformed, the other of persisting in a mere point of honour. Some will perhaps think they have been guilty of two more;—the destruction of twenty-four thousand lives on their own side, and Lord knows how many thousands on t'other, with the burning of towns, desolation of the country, and the expense of above thirty millions of money; the second consists of two parts —rejection of all proposals of accommodation offered by the Opposition, and the delay of offering terms themselves till they knew it was too late; for Lord North was asked[1] if he did not know that the treaty between the Americans and France is signed? He would not answer till Sir George Saville hallooed out, "An answer, an answer, an answer!" His Lordship then rose, could not deny the fact, but said he did not know it *officially;* that is, I suppose, it does not stand on the votes of the Parliament at Paris.

What shall I say more? though this is not half of that ignominious seventeenth of February. The measure passed *nemine contradicente*. The Tories gulped their shame, the rest *pocketed*. *Note.* The Opposition approved an attempt at peace, though a hopeless one. Charles Fox congratulated himself on having converted Lord North.

[1] By Fox. "My cousin, Thomas Walpole, had acquainted me that the treaty with France was signed."—See *Walpole's important MS. Note in Russell's Fox*, i. 173.—CUNNINGHAM.

The papers will tell you the rest. If anything could deepen this recantation of wilful criminalty, it is that it was extorted at last by the urgency of the moment; in short, to prevent this pretended spirit of pacification from being anticipated by France's notification of her alliance with the American States to all Europe;—what if by a declaration of war! Her troops are in full march to the coast, the Duc de Lauzun recalled hence and ordered to be in France by the 26th. How one blushes to be an Englishman! to be a countryman of the majority! I have no comfort but that I am not a Scot.

A night's rest has not dissipated the astonishment of mankind. Everybody that comes in stares, and cannot express himself. Who can at once reconcile a supplication of alliance with the high and mighty States of America, with a total improbability of obtaining it? and the faintest hope of peace, with a prospect of a war with France? How, an acknowledgment of independence, with a pretension of supplies, or a suspension of the war for a year and a half, with any intention of renewing it, when the Americans shall have had time to settle their government and recruit? but who *can* digest all the contradictions into which the Government plunges every day?

Who can believe what I have read in the papers to-day?—that one Hutton, a Moravian, has been despatched to Paris to fling himself at Dr. Franklin's feet and sue for forgiveness? it is said that the man fell on the Doctor's neck with tears, and implored Peace. What triumph on one side! what humiliation on the other! Will princes still listen to those vile flatterers who fascinate them with visions of empire, that terminate in such mortifications? for the philosopher replied, "It is too late."

One cannot rein one's pen at such a moment: it runs away with moralities; but I will stifle common-place reflections. Shall I not appear a trifler if I can mix any thing else with such thoughts? yet having crossed over into a fourth page, I will fill up the remainder with two bagatelles; one was a story related in the House of Commons. Somebody passing along the road in Scotland, heard great outcries, and lamentation, and complaints of violence. He stopped to inquire the cause; another person replied, "Oh, they are only making volunteers," i. e. pressing volunteers.

I have waded through 'Alfred.' The author says it has been objected that he has tamed a legislator into a lover in a novel, but he pleads that Alfred had probably been in love. The same excuse would apologise for representing the Duke of Marlborough, not as a

hero, but slabbering in his dotage. In the play itself I found this line, and have written in the title-page as a motto,

I shall surprise you much; my name is Alfred;

mine is

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

P.S. Pray tell me you receive this.[1]

1707. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1778.

I DO not know how to word the following letter; how to gain credit with you! How shall I intimate to you, that you must lower your topsails, waive your imperial dignity, and strike to the colours of the thirteen United Provinces of America? Do not tremble, and imagine that Washington has defeated General Howe, and driven him out of Philadelphia; or that Gates has taken another army; or

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, Feb.* 23, 1778.

As many millions of thanks are due to you for your two letters of the 12th and 18th, particularly for the last, as there have been millions of money spent in order to persuade the Americans to permit us to acknowledge their independency. But I have hardly time to pay you, and nothing but thanks to pay you withal. I am deeply engaged in my Fast Sermon, which is to be preached on Friday, and not half finished yet. My text is taken out of the book of the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah, and is as follows:

Abroad the sword bereaveth,
At home there is as death,

which you perceive runs very musically, and even lyrically—

'Twas when the seas were roaring
With hollow blasts of wind.

If all my periods have as fine a rhythmus, I don't doubt the Sermon will have an uncommon effect on the ears of our Lord Mayor and Aldermen. To be serious, I mean to write it with care, lest I should find it necessary to print it; for this is a Tory town, though there is a Rockingham club in it, and I question not but they will be ready to misrepresent it, however *macte virtute*. This is no time to be mealy-mouthed in.

My very principal virgin is within a few weeks of her time, and 'Elfrida' [Mrs. Hartley] herself is obliged to go to Bath, perhaps to lie in too; so I fancy the representation of my tragedy will be postponed till next winter, and will probably be performed in the Opera House which Sheridan and Harris have bought. I am rather pleased at this, as it will be more likely then and there to have fair play. I write this on a sheet of paper on which my friend Mr. Burgh had previously transcribed the story I mentioned to you. If you are curious to have it better authenticated, we will examine Martin Luther's Works for the purpose. Pray don't count the lines in

that Portsmouth is invested by an American fleet. No: no military *new* event has occasioned this revolution. The sacrifice has been made on the altar of Peace. Stop again: peace is not made, it is only implored,—and, I fear, only on this side of the Atlantic. In short, yesterday, *February* 17th, a most memorable era, Lord North opened his Conciliatory Plan,—no partial, no collusive one. In as few words as I can use, it solicits peace with the States of America: it haggles on no terms; it acknowledges the Congress, or anybody that pleases to treat; it confesses errors, misinformation, ill-success, and impossibility of conquest; it disclaims taxation, desires commerce, hopes for assistance, allows the independence of America, not verbally, yet virtually, and suspends hostilities till June 1779. It does a little more: not *verbally*, but *virtually*, it confesses that the Opposition have been in the right from the beginning to the end.

The warmest American cannot deny but these gracious condescensions are ample enough to content that whole continent; and yet, my friend, such accommodating facility had one defect,—it came too late. The treaty between the high and mighty States and France is signed; and instead of peace, we must expect war with the high allies. The French army is come to the coast, and their officers here are recalled.

The House of Commons embraced the plan, and voted it, *nemine*

this letter to twit me for my brevity, for indeed I have nothing more to say; and what with twice a day prayers, chapters, and settling of fines, and visits from the gentry of the place, who always make them at the most inconvenient times, I am really almost as fully and as usefully employed as if I was Sir Gray Cooper.

Believe me ever yours,

W. Mason.

[1] The following tale is extracted from a book entitled 'Meditations of a divine Soul, or the Christian's Guide amidst the various opinions of a vain world,' printed in London for John Kersey, 1703, octavo. The tale is ascribed to Martin Luther, but without any reference to the portion of his writings from which it is taken.

"I knew a young man in the city of Erfurdt who used his utmost efforts to debauch a damsel that waited upon his mother, insomuch that this gentlewoman being informed by the same damsel of her son's design, resolved to prevent him, &c.

* * * * *

* * * * In process of time the mother took her daughter home, as if she were the child of a stranger, who was of so delicate a complexion and of so obliging a behaviour that the son fell in love with her, and married her with the mother's consent, neither of them knowing anything at all of the matter; so that she was his daughter, sister, and wife. But the judgment of God soon overtook the mother's horrid crime, and fell heavy upon the son for his former wickedness."

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[1] This extract is in the writing of Mr. Burgh.—Mitford

contradicente. It is to pass both Houses with a rapidity that will do everything but overtake time past. All the world is in astonishment. As my letter will not set out till the day after to-morrow, I shall have time to tell you better what is thought of this amazing step.

Feb. 20.

In sooth I cannot tell you what is thought. Nobody knows what to think. To leap at once from an obstinacy of four years to a total concession of everything; to stoop so low, without hopes of being forgiven—who can understand such a transformation? I must leave you in all your wonderment; for the cloud is not dispersed. When it shall be, I doubt it will discover no serene prospect! All that remains certain is, that America is not only lost but given up. We must no longer give ourselves Continental airs! I fear even our trident will find it has lost a considerable prong.

I have lived long, but never saw such a day as last Tuesday! From the first, I augured ill of this American war; yet do not suppose that I boast of my penetration. Far was I from expecting such a conclusion! Conclusion!—*y sommes nous?* Acts of Parliament have made a war, but cannot repeal one. They have provoked —not terrified; and Washington and Gates have respected the Speaker's mace no more than Oliver Cromwell did.

You shall hear as events arise. I disclaim all sagacity, and pretend to no foresight. It is not an Englishman's talent. Even the second sight of the Scots has proved a little purblind.

Have you heard that Voltaire is actually in Paris?[1] Perhaps soon you will learn French news earlier than I can.

What scenes my letters to you have touched on for eight-and-thirty years! I arrived here at the eve of the termination of my father's happy reign. The Rebellion, as he foresaw, followed; and much disgrace. Another war ensued, with new disgraces. And then broke forth Lord Chatham's sun; and all was glory and extensive empire. Nor tranquillity nor triumph are our lot now! The womb of time is not with child of a mouse,—but adieu! I shall probably write again before you have digested half the meditations this letter will have conjured up.

[1] Madame du Deffand had written to Walpole on the 10th—"Voltaire arrived here yesterday, at four in the afternoon, with his niece Madame Denis. I wrote him a short note, to which he has returned this answer:—'J'arrive mort, et je ne veux ressusciter que pour me jetter aux genoux de Madame la Marquise du Deffand.'"—Wright.

1708. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, March 4, 1778.

It is not from having anything new to tell you that I write you a few lines, but to ask how I may send you half-a-dozen more *gazettes littéraires*, for I conclude your Varelsts are in town. There is no hurry about them; they will always be equally new to you, and not be much so neither. You will find in them the following pretty riddle, which I had seen before:

Eloigné de l'objet que j'aime,
Lui seul calme mon ennui;
Il est plus beau que l'amour même
Mais elle est plus belle que lui.

The word is a *portrait*, and is rather too enigmatic, for one must know the solution, to find any sense in *elle*. I have translated it, but as we have no genders it is impossible to render *lui* and *elle;* my imitation perhaps makes it too clear:

From the dear object of my dreams
Removed, I still that object see
As fair as love itself it seems:
Yet she is fairer still than he.

I wish you would try it; you will have better success. I have made another Enigma on the same subject, but cannot tell whether it is good or bad, for how can one tell whether a riddle is difficult to guess, when one knows the subject beforehand? but do not I lay you under the same difficulty, *le voici!*

I counterfeit all bodies, yet have none.
Bodies give shadows, shadows give me one
Loved for another's sake; that person yet
Is my chief enemy whene'er we meet;
Thinks me too old, though blest with endless youth,
And like a monarch hates my speaking truth.

The two middle verses are very bad I know.

I agree with you; there is no harm in Mrs. *Elfrida* Hartley's pregnancy. Your drama could not be well represented by the set at Covent Garden; not that the union of the two companies will make one good, yet will be a better than the worse half. However, I doubt whether the old saying will prove true in your case, that *ce qui est différé n'est pas perdu*. My reason I gave six weeks ago

to Le Texier. He was consulting me whether I thought it would be advantageous for him to take the Opera House on the present plan (on which the other managers have outbidden him): I replied, "*Oui, tant qu'il y ait de l'Angleterre.*"

The two conciliatory bills are so very yielding, that nothing but the immediate dread of a French war, or the impossibility of raising money to maintain the armies and fleets in America, could have reconciled the Court to such vast concessions, if they are sincere in the desire of treating, which, notwithstanding wiser men than I believe them, I doubt. I can see obvious reasons for seeming to treat: I hear none to persuade me that the Americans will treat. Lord Carlisle is named one of the Commissioners, and is very fit to make a treaty that will not be made.

Voltaire came to Paris without leave, but they say has received an indulgent promise from Monsr. de Maurepas, that he shall not be molested. His chief object was to get a new play acted, which he calls 'Irene;' it was Alexis Comnene, but the latter word sounded too harsh. He has half despatched himself with reading this piece to the actors, and thinks of nothing else except of being received by the King and Queen, which Madame du Deffand, who has made him two visits, thinks he will not obtain. I should like to have been present at this interview of the two only surviving lilies of the *siècle de Louis Quatorze;* yet he is more occupied with the dandelions of the present age.

I am very thankful for the extract Mr. Burgh gave himself the trouble to send me, and am satisfied. Mrs. Delany had heard of and insisted on seeing the Tragedy. I knew how it would shock her devout delicacy. She returned it with compliments, but was sorry the subject would condemn it to oblivion—perhaps so; and its more intrinsic demerits, but I do not think being acted will save many of its contemporaries! I am impatient to see your Sermon. Did you observe a passage in the Fast Service that has diverted people much, as it came out just after the *nemine contradicente* on the pacific bills. "Then all the people shall say *after the minister,* Turn us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned."

I am tempted to sign my name in French, for the pleasure of quoting the following lines from Voltaire's 'Indiscret,' the ridiculous parts of which suit me exactly;

TRASIMON.

le vieux Seigneur Horace

M'a prié.——

DAMIS.

Voilà bien de quoi je m'embarrasse.
Horace est un vieux fou, plutôt qu'un vieux seigneur,
Tout chamarré d'orgueil, pétri d'un faux honneur,
Assez bas à la cour, important à la ville
Et non moins ignorant qu'il veut paroître habile.

HORACE.

1709. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, March 5, 1778.

YOUR letter, my dear Sir, which I received two days ago, is dated the 7th of last month; and you there speak with great distrust of seeing Lady Lucy again. I fear your forebodings were too well founded; for it is said here that she is actually dead.[1] I had heard so ten days ago, but flattered myself that it was not true. Now I see it mentioned in the papers. As you only just knew her enough to love and lament her, I am sorry you ever did see her! Your nephew will feel the loss of so amiable a woman; and yet it is better for him that it is over; as he was only witness to her decay, and perpetually tortured with fears and doubts. His behaviour is exceedingly honourable to him, and discovers a true *Mann's* heart, —unluckily, to make that expression just, it is necessary to double the *n*. I have talked to you philosophically on the vanity of being attached to the continuation of families; yet it is so natural, and I am so susceptible of that vanity, that I look forward to your nephew's marrying again, and having an heir to Linton.

You will have been impatient for the consequences of Lord North's Conciliatory Plan. The substantial consequences cannot, you are sensible, be known till the Commissioners arrive in America, and return the answer of the Congress; unless their departure is anticipated by some strong declaration of France in their favour, and which would render a treaty hopeless: many expect such a notification immediately. I am grown such a sceptic, that I believe nothing but *facts past*. The bills meet no obstruction in the House of Commons. They are to-day before the Lords; where I suppose they will experience comments rather than impediments. The intended pacification is not very popular, yet at most produces low murmurs. The nation has leaped from outrageous war to a most humiliating supplication for peace, with as little emotion as one

[1] Lady Lucy Mann died in Italy, on the 7th of January.—WALPOLE.

passes in an ague from a shivering fit to a burning one; though I think in the inverted order, for I never had an ague. Methinks the patient's being so little affected by the sudden transition looks as if its constitution had contracted the insensibility of dotage. Every week may produce an era; yet I think nothing very important will happen yet. France has patience in one sense of the word, and we in another; and therefore we shall *bear* as long as they *forbear*. They best know what term they have set to their inactivity; my whole wisdom consists in abstaining from conjectures. Penetration is a fine thing; a genius now and then looks into futurity: but all I know is, that I have no such talent, nor believe much in those who pretend to it. My old face, like the one of Janus, only looks back; the young one may look forward to what will belong to it, and youth is apt to think it sees far: but age is as often mistaken, when it takes its experience for spectacles; they magnify the dim eye that looks through them, more than the objects they look to.

I will certainly mention you at our little Court, when they return to town. At present they are gone to the Duke's lodge in the New Forest for change of air. Indeed, it seems very difficult for his Royal Highness to find a situation that suits him. Heats destroy him, and damps are as bad. He caught cold above a month ago, had a violent cough, and the asthma frightfully since. It is a terrifying disorder to see; yet I am much easier when he suffers under it, than when the humour falls on his bowels. If he does not mend in the Forest, they will make a voyage to Bourdeaux for some weeks for the benefit of the sea-air, and return when the great heats reign. Mrs. Haywood has been dying of a fever—so have many persons. Sir Thomas Hesketh died at one the night before last—but has long been dying.

The principality of Auverquerque[1] is a sort of Iricism. King William would not allow the Lords Rochford and Grantham, as they were illegitimate branches from Prince Maurice and Prince Henry Frederic, to take the name of Nassau, but obliged them to bear those of Zulestein and Auverquerque; after his death they assumed that of Nassau. The Duke of Marlborough never preferred the principality of Mindleheim to his duchy: surely an English peerage with substantial privilege in one's own country is more

[1] Lord Cowper, being made a Prince of the Empire, had a mind to have that title; his mother being one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Lord Grantham.—WALPOLE.

dignified than a nominal principality in another; when it is transferred to a third country, it is still more ridiculous. I wonder Mademoiselle [Anne] Pitt does not beg the Pope to create her Princess Fossani. I knew a foreigner at Paris who had a madness of wearing the orders of different countries. He was forbidden to assume the Saint Esprit, but indulged in every other knighthood. I have seen him at the theatres by turns Knight of the Garter, Bath, Thistle, Elephant, &c. &c. We had once a mad Queen Elizabeth here, who on the first day of the session, as my father was coming down from St. James's, gave him her speech and ordered him to read it to her Parliament;—it was not Mrs. Pitt, I assure you, nor Lady Mary Coke.

Strawberry Hill, 10*th*.

It looks very much now as if the war would very soon make itself. A French squadron is sailed westward, and Captain Digby has been despatched with another in pursuit of it. Seamen are not apt to be so formal and dilatory as plenipotentiaries. The passions too begin to awaken. The City grows moody again; the Stocks fall; the Ministers are warmly pressed in both Houses. The new loan of six millions does not take kindly. The bended knee to America does not please. Dr. Franklin boasts that Philadelphia will be starved into a Burgoyneism. Lord Temple seems to snuff confusion and is come forth again, and spoke against the conciliatory bills. Last year he entrapped John the Painter: I suppose he solves these inconsistencies by constancy to *self*. In that light, how uniform has his whole life been; though every brother and every friend has been sacrificed to his passions! I, who sit aloof from the conflict, see these things as they are; and should behold them with indifference, if the general want of principle were not a worse indication of approaching ruin than the concomitant circumstances. All men see a prospect of rising on confusion: no man reflects that want of virtue cannot correct what the want of it has occasioned. Adieu!

1710. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Monday night, late, March 16, 1778.

I HAD not seen the 'Morning Post' when I dissuaded publication. You certainly have had provocation, if you are inclined to take it: I trust at least your testimony will not be lost. Perhaps the present

instant is not the fittest, as the French ambassador's declaration has engaged all attention; I mean as far as a first moment can do; for in two days I suppose we shall be as thoughtless as ever. Nay, they who should be most alarmed, seem besotted—indeed they had little way to go; but an old regiment is to sail to-morrow for Halifax. I went out of town on Saturday morning, not knowing of the French declaration; it followed me to Strawberry that night, yet, as if I were a Minister, I did not return till this afternoon; and as both Houses are sitting, could get no further intelligence. I shall probably hear something before this sets out, but what can I learn that I do not know? The alternative is to be buffeted by France and turn t'other cheek, or to have England and Ireland invaded. I could almost wish the storm would burst on Scotland; but who would go thither? There is one consolation however in our wretched state; it had been ten thousand times more grievous to have America conquered and England enslaved; and the guilty will now be the greatest sufferers. Nay, October was twelvemonth, I should have jumped at an option of the present moment. In short, we are disgraced and ruined, and shall never be what we have been —but Scotland will not triumph. I know not whether the Ministers will endeavour to hold their places six months longer by the favour of France; or whether Lord Chatham's old crutch will be sent for to draw a circle round St. James's. I expect nothing but patching and botching from anybody, which will suit the insensibility of the times. There are no grounds for confidence anywhere. We shall moulder piecemeal into our insignificant islandhood, for it is an age for vigorous resurrection. I will go answer the rest of your letter before I go to bed, that I may not dream of our shameful position, nor have visions of revival that will never be realised.

You accuse me very unjustly of neglecting your alteration of my Tragedy. I always thought it magic, to be effected by so few words and should have adopted it, had I ever had thoughts of its being represented; but nothing could induce me to venture it on the stage, not from superabundant modesty, but from the abusive spirit of the times. I have no notion of presenting one's self coolly to a savage mob to be torn to pieces; and you know I am as tender of my friends as of myself. I think this country at present in every light the sink of Europe; void of taste and of everything ingenuous. Calamity has often resuscitated its powers, but there are few or no instances I believe of an empire that has fallen by its own corruptions, replacing itself on its throne. My vanity is too proud

to desire to twinkle under the auspices of Palæologi and Porphyrogeniti. Should I be remembered, I should wish it might be as one of the last reign.

I have entirely forgotten what Sir John Dalrymple said in his preface, but am most sure that if he quotes a Walpole as his recommender, it must have been my cousin Thomas; for I never saw the wretch, nor ever had the most indirect connection with him. To Mrs. Macaulay I did give a letter, but am ashamed of it, as she ought to be of her foolish and absurd 'Summary,' which is a wretched compilation from magazines, full of gross mistakes, and confounding all characters, levelling all for no end or purpose, but to support so silly an hypothesis, as that no king can be a good king, because he is a king. She defends James II. for the nonsensical pleasure of abusing King William, and has no more idea of general merit than Sir John Dalrymple. In short, whom does she approve but herself and her idolater — that dirty disappointed hunter of a mitre, Dr. Wilson, and Alderman Heathcote, a paltry worthless Jacobite, whom I remember, and her own grandfather Sawbridge, who, *she has been told*, was a mighty worthy man though dipped in the infamous job of the South Sea? In short, I ran through the book, had forgotten it, and only recollect it now to answer your question.

I enclose with this a letter I wrote to you last week, but did not care to send by the post; you will find some curious particulars in it. I have finished certain verses of which you saw part, but shall reserve them till we meet, as I shall the rest of my paper till to-morrow. By the way, I do not know who the transcriber of your Sermon is, nor guess what you mean by "the triumph of the minority," unless you allude to their carrying one question against Lord North for a tax on places. It would have been a greater blow to the Crown than they will ever give, even if they become the majority; but they lost in the next night, on the report, and will take care not to carry it, if ever they are Ministers.

17*th*.

Lord Stormont is recalled, for we are to be angry, since being tame would not do. Dr. Franklin is to be received at Versailles to-day as ambassador. A message is to be delivered to each House to-day, and the majority in each is, I suppose, to answer,—We will assist you to chastise France for having been forced by you to pick up what you threw away. Lord North had the modesty yesterday to recommend unanimity, and to affirm he keeps his

place from a point of honour. Burke made a fine application of Lord Bedford's answer to King James,—"I had a son who could have advised your Majesty,"—America could have assisted your Majesty. Charles Fox's reply was in a rougher style. The Stocks are not of the heroic majority, yet I believe the Ministers will stay from errant fear at St. James's till they are torn out of it. That will be a poor compensation and an useless precedent; for posterity, with all its reading, is never the better for example. James II. could read, but could not remember even what he had seen.

Well! I must finish, though my pen's tongue could run on for ever. I feel all sort of feelings, none comfortable, but that we shall be despicable first before we are slaves; the contrary would be more mortifying. France has a right to humble us. The true English who are in America have behaved like Englishmen, without any Scot-alloy. The victories of France will be over Scots. Dr. Franklin's triumph has been over a Scot Ambassador. Pursue this idea; we shall have occasion to pay ourselves with leathern coin.

P.S. Let me know the moment you receive this packet. I add a French tract which you must take care to return, though I understand little of it. The *Gazette Littéraire* will show you how it relates to their present musical contests. What I understand is able and full of address, but surely the irony is above most readers. I shall be glad to have all my gazettes again when you come this waywards.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, March* 13, 1778.

I HAVE often tried, but could never make a Riddle in my life, therefore I will not attempt to correct yours, but I have a better reason still. If I was to do it, 'tis ten to one but you have forgot that you ever writ them, and consequently would not understand my corrections. You have served me in a similar sort once or twice before; nay, when I had the effrontery to make an alteration in your Tragedy, which alteration you approved, you yet gave that alteration up merely because you had forgotten what that alteration was, which, had it been attended to, would have secured your 'Mysterious Mother' from the devout delicacy of Mrs. Delany; nay, would have made it "pit, box, and gallery" with any tragedy ancient as 'Elfrida,' or modern as the 'Battle of Hastings.'

Now to show you how much I hold your critiques in devout memorial, I give you to know that I have locked up my Sermon in my bureau till that goodly time shortly comes when we shall all be absolutely ruined, all but the said Sermon, which then will shine forth with redoubled lustre. But I also give you to know that when it does come forth every iota of it must stand as it is, for I hear it has been taken down in short hand, and there is a man [Mr. Goodrick] here, the son of a certain Baronet (who did in safer times what Dr. Dodd was afterwards hanged for, and who is now, as he ought to be, a Privy Councillor), who is highly incensed at the said Sermon. He wrote against Price, but was not read, and he aims at a place or pension because his father does not give him *de quoi vivre*, and, I question not, is the person

1711. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

March 17, 1778.

I HAVE scarce a moment's time to write, and it is only—what an *only !*—to tell you that the French Ambassador notified to Lord Weymouth on Friday, that his Court had concluded a treaty of commerce and amity with the independent States of America ; *but* had had the *attention* not to make it an exclusive treaty : so, we may

who has called himself the congregation of York (vide 'Morning Post,' March 10). Now this being the case, you see, there can be no softenings whatever, which I am sorry for, more on your account than my own, for I should certainly have spared Sir John Dalrymple had I then known (which his preface has since taught me) that you gave him recommendatory letters to France. However, as I said before, my unfortunate Sermon is safe under lock and key, and shall remain so as long as possible, perhaps for ever, unless I be in self-defence forced to produce it.

Pray is this triumph of the minority any triumph at all? and what say you to Mrs. Macaulay's late volume, to whom also you gave recommendatory letters to France. I beg your pardon, I believe it was Lord Harcourt and not you.

If you will please to send the *gazettes littéraires* to Mr. Stonhewer, with directions to Charles Carter, my painting servant, to send them to me by the York Fly, I shall have them speedily. I left him in town to perfect himself in drawing at the Academy, and anything you choose to send he will convey speedily to me.

I am tired to death of my Residence, the cold of the Minster is intolerable. I wish they would tax Deans and Chapters, and make them as unprofitable as pensions, that I might have an excuse for shrinking myself into my Rectorial shell. By the way, I meant nothing in the way of *nolo episcopari* in the sentence of my Sermon which you objected to ; I only did not wish to be a "ways and means" man, or a Doctor Price. A man may be a good bishop, and be neither of these characters, so no more at present from yours entirely,

W. MASON.

Pray erase with a pen (if you do not immediately burn this letter) the *scandalum magnatum* contained in the sentence about the Baronet.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, March 21, 1778.

I HAVE just now received the parcel very safe with the two delightful letters inclosed. While I continue here, anything will be forwarded to me safely and expeditiously by sending them to Charles Carter. I am not so easily provoked as to change my mind for a flam in the 'Morning Post.' I will at least stay to see who prints on the occasion before me ; those that have preached before the Lords and Commons, not to mention St. James's, ought to take precedency of the press. before him that only discoursed to my Lord Mayor of York. The man I mean is a Mr. Goodrick, son of a baronet, one of Lord Bingley's heirs ; he married a Dutch woman, and wants to go abroad as an Envoy.

Pray out of all charity and goodness write frequently to me at this crisis, though I can send you nothing in return.—The more disinterested and like the tenor of the times will be your correspondence. The Post gives me not a moment more, and I must conclude yours as always,

W. MASON.

trade with America, if America will condescend to trade with us. I doubt there were some words of France not being disposed to be molested in their commerce with their new friends. In consequence of that declaration, Lord Stormont's recall was sent off that night. To-day the Ministers are to acquaint both Houses with the insult; and, I suppose, intend to be addressed with vows of support. The Stocks, not being members of Parliament, do not vote for war, nor behave like heroes. Alas! I am ashamed of irony. Neither do I love to send my augurnes through every post-house. However, every one must know that a French war is not exactly a compensation for the loss of America. We, the herd, the *Achivi*, must take the beverage our rulers brew for us; and we that can, must console ourselves with not having contributed to the potion. I believe it will be a bitter one; but I should be still less tranquil if I had furnished a drop.

I have received your melancholy letter on poor Lady Lucy's death, and had written to you on it before, nor will open the wound again. Our situation will remove that cloud, and fill your mind with others.

Europe is going again to be a theatre of blood, as America has been. The Emperor and Prussia are going, I think have begun a war! 'Tis endless to moralise; human life is forced to do so, but *en pure perte*. The system changes, not the consequences. Force was the first great arbitress of human affairs. The shrewd observed, that Art could counteract and control Strength—and for a long time Policy ruled. But, Policy having exhausted all its resources, and having been detected in them all, Impudence restored Force, which is now sole governess. She seized and shared Poland, and now sets up the same right to Bavaria. We tried the plan in America, but forgot we had not that essential to the new *jus gentium*, an hundred thousand men, and that our Bavaria[1] was on t'other side of the Atlantic. I hope the ocean, that was against us there, will be our friend at home!

Adieu! This is a new chapter in our correspondence. I will write as events rise; you must excuse me if I have not always time, as I have not at present, to make my letters long in proportion to the matter.

[1] The Emperor and the King of Prussia were at war; the Emperor claiming part of the domains of the late Elector of Bavaria.—WALPOLE.

1712. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 26, 1778.

THOUGH you have desired me to write often at this crisis, and though I am never penurious of my ink, I waited till I could send you something more than rumours. The darkness has not hung long without a thunder-clap. France has stopped all our shipping in their ports, and the omniscient Lord Stormont himself has learnt *that* piece of news at Boulogne, being detained there by the embargo. It is also expected that the Spanish Chargé des Affaires will to-day or to-morrow compliment the King with an acknowledgment of the States of America, as civilly as Monsieur de Noailles did. It is even said that Portugal allows their title. Well, say you, and are not people frightened? what is to be done? Frightened; yes, some are—some that are guilty, and more that are innocent; most, not at all! for folly, that sees a ghost, always tumbles down a precipice that is before its eyes. But you *will* have some answer, and I *must* tell you what is to be done; that is, I must foresee, *not* what can be done, but what will be. I believe the oracle at Hayes [Lord Chatham] has been consulted, but not having received *carte blanche*, shrouded its dignity in ambiguity. Perhaps to-day more humble ambassadors have been sent: I vow I do not know there have, but the event I guess. The god himself taking the form of his Pythonisse, and enveloped in flannels, that are the symbols of vast vigour of mind beneath, will go to Buckingham-house, and finding full acquiescence to all his terms (by taking care to ask none really unpalatable), will then present a long list of names that are to be substituted to the proscribed. Lord Rockingham shall go to Ireland, the Duke of Richmond shall be this, Charles Fox shall be t'other, Mr. Burke something else, &c. &c. &c. I mean after Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne, Barré, Dunning, and perhaps the Duke of Grafton have been appointed to the essential posts. "Certainly," will be the answer, "all are very proper." Madam, the priestess, then notifies to all the nominees the graces she has bestowed, and orders them to take possession of their several departments. They all laugh in her face, and call her a foolish old beldame, and thus a weak opposition is more weakened. *The most concerned* is not very sorry, the only moment is lost; France will tell you the rest.

I sit resigned to our fate, for when one can do no good, and is but

an individual, it is impertinent to be anything but passive. I am less alarmed too than I should be, because I had the same apprehensions above thirty years ago, and because I had then thirty years longer to live than I have now. In youth, too, imagination's wing flies as far as it can. Experience tells one that all does not happen that may. I think I shall outlive the storm and talk over the ruins; but in truth I believe they will be considerable. France seems to have waited with wise phlegm for the fulness of time, and we may expect that her blows will be stunning. My idea is, that she will invade us here ostensibly, more effectually in Ireland, in America, and in the East. If she has success in all, and we none, why then Lord Mansfield will shake off his mortal coil, and persuade himself that he always meant the destruction of the house of Hanover, not its *unbounded* elevation. These are my sober cool opinions. I shall be glad to be a lying Prophet, for Jeremiah himself was a sad fellow if he comforted himself under captivity with the honour of having predicted it.

Yours ever,

H. W.

1718. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

March 27, 1778.

The war is not yet arrived, though it is certainly at next door, for France laid an embargo on all our vessels in their ports; one may call it, seized them. Lord Stormont himself, though got to Boulogne, is forced to stay there for want of conveyance, or must come round by Holland. This made us stare a little two days ago; but last night I heard that this hostility is conditional, and only a boisterous way of wrenching out of our hands the Kouli Khan, a French ship that we had taken, and that Monsieur de Noailles had reclaimed without success. I doubt we shall take and give so many of these slaps, that the declaration of war may, to save trouble, be reserved to the peace; and then, as Hamlet says,

> the funeral baked meats
> Will coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

There was a report, too, that Spain would send us a notification of having made a treaty with the Americans also; but this is contradicted, and their new Ambassador, Almadovar, is said to have received orders to come to us forthwith. In short, rumours of wars

beget a thousand other reports. The town has expected a restoration of Lord Chatham; but that notion has subsided too. The best thing I do know is, that we are very seriously occupied in defending ourselves. No more troops are to go to America; we are collecting our whole force; the new-raised regiments will have been an advantageous addition, as they were not embarked; and the militia, which is complete in every county but two, is to take the field. As to America, it will certainly retain its seat among the sovereignties of this world: so, Columbus's invasion begins to be set aside; and one quarter of the globe will not be held *in commendam* by another! Imagination could expatiate widely on that chapter—but what have I to do with a new era in the annals of mankind?

Our own Old Continent, that has so long been ravaged by ambition, is not yet abandoned to the comfort of decay. Yet one now hears that hostilities between the Emperor and Prussia have not commenced, as was said. I doubt that imperial philosopher, who scattered so many humane apophthegms last year at Paris, is a little too impatient to employ his Austrian talons. What a farce to visit hospitals, when one thinks of nothing but stocking them with maimed carcasses! What buckets of blood it costs, before a Prince takes his place at the table of Fame, that might be earned so much better by benevolence! The enemies of mankind arrogate what is due only to the friends.

I was going on perhaps in a string of moralities, but was interrupted by Dr. Monro, who came to tell me that Lord Orford is come to himself. This is such a deliverance to me, that I cannot think of any consequences: indeed, I do not care about them. Pray notify this lucid interval to the excellent Signora Madre. Adieu!

1714. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, March 31, 1778.

I DID think it long, indeed, dear Sir, since I heard from you, and am very sorry the gout was the cause. I hope after such long persecution you will have less now than you apprehend. I should not have been silent myself, had I had anything to tell you that you would have cared to hear.

Politics have been the only language, and abuse the only expression of the winter, neither of which are, or deserve to be inmates of your peaceable hermitage. I wish, however, they may

not have grown so serious as to threaten every retreat with intrusion! I will let you know when I am settled at Strawberry Hill, and can look over your kind collections relating to Mr. Baker. He certainly deserves his place in the 'Biographia,' but I am not surprised that *you* would not submit to *his* being instituted and inducted by a Presbyterian [Kippis]. In truth, I, who have not the same zeal against dissenters, do not at all desire to peruse the History of their Apostles, which are generally very uninteresting.

You must excuse the shortness of this, in which, too, I have been interrupted. My nephew is as suddenly recovered as he did last time; and, though I am far from thinking him perfectly in his senses, a great deal of his disorder is removed, which, though it will save me a great deal of trouble, hurries me at present, and forces me to conclude.

1715. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, April 8, 1778.

Though my daily fellow-labourers of this morning will give you a minute account of the great event of yesterday, I should be a very negligent gazetteer if I took no notice of it. Lord Chatham fell in the Senate—not by daggers, nor by the thunder of Lord Suffolk's eloquence. He had spoken with every symptom of debility, repeated his own phrases, could not recollect his own ideas, and, which was no new practice, persisted in our asserting sovereignty over America, *though he could not tell by what means.* It was only new to confess his ignorance. The Duke of Richmond answered him with much decency and temper, though Lord Chatham had called *pursuit without means*, timid and pusillanimous conduct. The Earl was rising to reply, but fell down in a second fit of apoplexy, with strong convulsions and slabbering at the mouth. I do not doubt but the 'Morning Post' will allow the Duke more rhetoric than it ever acknowledged, in order to ascribe Lord Chatham's fall to his Grace's invectives; but he, who is all tenderness and sensibility, was so affected, that at night the Duchess [of Richmond] desired me not to name it: yet Lord Chatham is not dead, and to-day is better, if existing after two strokes can be called so. To be sure his biographer would have a fairer field, had he died in his vocation. In truth, I see no good he could have done, since he has embraced the idea of still conquering America; but much harm he must have

occasioned had the Court adopted him. Now I reckon him politically dead. He will probably neither recover strength nor faculties; his family will if possible prevent his re-appearance, and the Court will scarce inoculate a half-dead skeleton on their other infirmities. Lord Chatham certainly went to the House to express resentment at their having only dabbled with him indirectly, but his debility or perhaps some gleam of hope of being yet adopted, moderated his style: his water-gall Lord Temple was at his elbow.

I can tell you nothing definitive on war or peace. Pacification with France, and even with America, has been much sounded these last days, probably to prop the stocks; but the selection of Governor Johnstone for one of the Commissioners, who even during all the late debates anathematised American independence, implies not only adherence to sovereignty but no thoughts of change. Of Johnstone it is enough to say, that though a Scot in Opposition, he never lost sight of the promised land.

You may thank me for so much politics when I am overwhelmed with other business, and have even the militia on my hands. My nephew is suddenly come to himself again—only to his former self; but I must not tap this chapter—I should be endless. He is gone to take the command of the Norfolk Militia, and I am commissioned to dissuade him! *De profundis clamavi!* Well, fortune has some justice and dispenses antidotes with poisons. The Duke of Gloucester's children are to have a Parliamentary provision, and, considering everything, a very decent one. There is one thorn removed. I have recourse to my old anodynes, quartos, whenever I can snatch a moment. I have gone through Mr. Pennant's 'Welsh Tour,' which is a patch-work of all sorts of shreds stitched together with unpronounceable words, of DDwrr'rs and no vowels, so I do not remember much of what I cannot articulate. I have dipped into Mr. Warton's second volume, which seems more unentertaining than the former. I perceive he excommunicates Rowley totally. Lord Hardwicke is to present us on Saturday with two volumes of 'State Papers,'[1] but with due circumspection keeps back his by far most curious letters. I have a long conversation with Dr. Robertson to relate to you, but must reserve for some moment of more leisure. It would not be time lost to come to me for a week and hear me exhaust my wallet: you must not reckon upon too distant moments!

[1] Miscellaneous State Papers, from 1501 to 1726, 2 vols. 4to., 1778.—CUNNINGHAM.

My tattered frame grows weaker and weaker. I waste as few minutes as possible, but constant application of the mind to some duties or other will impair a memory that is enclosed in so frail an *étui*. Have you seen '*The Old Baron*,' a Gothic story,[1] professedly written in imitation of Otranto, but reduced to reason and probability! It is so probable, that any trial for murder at the Old Bailey would make a more interesting story. Mrs. Barbauld's 'Fragment' was excellent. This is a *caput mortuum*. Adieu. I have not a quarter of a minute to say more.

1716. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Thursday, April 9th, 1778.

I AM not going to announce more war than by my last: it seems to sleep, like a paroli at Faro, and be reserved for another deal. Though I write oftener than usual, I have not a full cargo every time; but I have two novel events to send you. The newspapers indeed anticipate many of my articles; but, as I suppose you pay me the compliment of opening my letters before the Gazettes, I shall be the first to inform you, though but by five minutes. Lord Chatham has again appeared in the House of Lords, and probably for the last time. He was there on Tuesday, against the earnest remonstrance of his physician; and, I think, only to make confusion worse confounded. He had intended to be very hostile to the Ministers, and yet to force himself into all their places by maintaining the *sovereignty* of America, to which none of the Opposition but his own few followers adhere; and they cannot, like a strolling company in a barn, fill all the parts of a drama with four or five individuals. It appeared early in his speech that he had lost himself; he did not utter half he intended, and sat down: but, rising to reply to the Duke of Richmond, he fell down in an apoplectic fit, and was thought dead. They transported him into the Jerusalem Chamber, and laid him on a table. In twenty minutes he recovered his senses, and was carried to a messenger's house adjoining, where he still remains. The scene was very affecting; his two sons, and son-in-law, Lord Mahon, were round him. The House paid a proper mark of respect by adjourning instantly.

The same incertitude remains on our general situation. I pretend

[1] Compare letter to Jephson, Jan. 27, 1780.—CUNNINGHAM.

to tell you facts only, not reasonings; and therefore will say no more now on the public. One event, indeed, of Parliamentary complexion touches my private feelings very particularly. The King has demanded a provision for his younger children, and has been so good as to add the Duke's to the list—nobly too, both from the proportion of the allowance, and the circumstances of the times. The King's sons are to have ten thousand a year each, his daughters six, Prince William eight, and Princess Sophia four. Thus, both income and rank are ascertained. This is a great thorn extracted from all our sides, and I trust will have good influence on his Royal Highness's health.

I was *débarrassé*'d (not in so comfortable a way) of my nephew. He has resumed the entire dominion of himself, and is gone into the country, and intends to command the militia. I have done all I could, when scarce anything was in my power, to prevent it; but in vain. He has even asked to be a major-general, which officers of militia cannot be. What a humiliation to know he is thus exposing himself, and not dare to interpose! Yet he is not ignorant of his situation. He said the other day to his Dalilah, speaking of Dr. Monro, "Patty, I like this doctor! don't you? We will have him *next time*." What an amazing compost of sense, insensibility, and frenzy! Adieu!

1717. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

April 16, 1778.

It is at the bottom of the first volume of the notes to p. 346 of Warton's second volume, that your Lordship will find how the Erle of Harcourt served the Kyng of his spyce-plate. That Kyng was the real, not nominal, Kyng of France. Will not this piece of intelligence entitle me at least to the post of Harcourt-Pursuivant?

I am very ambitious of serving that most ancient and noble House, to which I am bounden by inclination, zeal, and gratitude; and though I am not thought worthy of being *Printer* to it, I will never miss any occasion of showing myself

Lord and Lady Harcourt's
Most devoted humble servant.

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

1718. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 18, 1778.

I AM come hither like a good Christian to pass in retreat the holy week before Easter, and the unholy week of Newmarket, which has almost beaten Easter out of the Calendar, and to which yet I would give a Scripture appellation, and call it the *passover*. In these ten days I shall probably fulfil my promise of sending you the heads of my interview with Dr. Robertson; but I will tell you first the little else I have to say. Most people expect a French war: I still doubt it, I do not very well know why, but it does not seem a very decisive age. The Turks and Russians have not yet drawn blood. I take the Emperor to be the most impatient to be a Cæsar, and his mother I suppose is very ready to employ him at a distance from home.

The Commissioners are gone, and Mr. Adams is arrived at Paris. As we do not know the amount of their treaty, all we do is in the dark. I suspect that Dr. Franklin has duped Governor Johnstone, and yet many a dishonest man has been made a fool, as well as many an honest one.

The Opposition are notoriously split into two factions. Lord Shelburne heads the Chathamites, and puts me in mind of a French beggar, who asked charity as one of the *quinze vingt aveugles;* why, said the person he applied to, you are not blind! *helas! non, monsieur,* said the fellow, *je ne suis qu'un aspirant.*

The Foleys are at last likely to lose their cause by the indecent impetuosity of their partizans. If you have not seen it in the papers, you will. Oh! I have begun my letter on a torn sheet, but I cannot write it over again, and so shall proceed. Yes, you will thank me for an admirable *bon-mot* of George Selwyn. When the Foleys had more chance of cancelling their father's will, he said, "The New Testament will now be more favourable to the Jews than the Old."

There is a pretty poem just published called 'The Wreath of Fashion:' it is written by one Tickell, a son of Addison's friend.[1]

[1] Richard Tickell was not the son, but the *grandson*, of Addison's friend. He married a Miss Linley, the sister of Sheridan's first wife, and died by his own hand in 1793. He was the author also (1778) of 'Anticipation,' one of the liveliest political satires ever written; and (1780) of a clever 'Epistle in verse, from the Hon. Charles Fox partridge-shooting, to the Hon. John Townshend cruising.' Compare Walpole to the Misses Berry, 7th Nov., 1793.—CUNNINGHAM.

He has been an assistant at Eton, and wrote this winter another poem at least as good, called 'The Project.' The conclusion of the new is very inferior to the rest, and ends absurdly, like Anstey's on Lord Tavistock, with a hemistich; and as absurdly with a panegyric on that water-gruel bard Shenstone, who never wrote anything good but his 'Schoolmistress.' 'The Wreath' is a satire on sentimental poets, amongst whom, still more absurdly, he classes Charles Fox; but there is a great deal of wit *par cy, par là*. He calls sentimental comedies, *Dramatic Homelies;* says Lord Palmerston *fineers* (what an admirable word!) rebus's and charades with chips of poetry; and when Lord of the Admiralty, like Ariel, wrecked navies with a song—sure that is an excellent application.

I have very near finished Warton, but, antiquary as I am, it was a tough achievement. He has dipped into an incredible ocean of dry and obsolete authors of the dark ages, and has brought up more rubbish than riches, but the latter chapters, especially on the progress and revival of the theatre, are more entertaining; however it is very fatiguing to wade through the muddy poetry of three or four centuries that had never a poet.

Have you heard how Voltaire has been at his own Apotheosis? He has literally been crowned with laurel in a side box at his 'Irene,' and seen the actors and actresses decorate his bust with garlands on the stage. As he is so very old, one must excuse his submitting to this vanity; nay, it must have been moving,—yet one is more charmed with the *violette, qui se cache sous l'herbe.*

As Lord and Lady Strafford are to drink tea here this evening, I shall desire my Lord to frank this modicum, that you may not pay for a scrap that has nothing in it. My conversation with the Scottish historian is as little worth, especially after I had prepared you for expecting it. When do you quit your Cathedral for your Parish? I shall not leave my little hill for the dinner at the Royal Academy on Thursday, only to figure the next day in the newspapers in the list of the Mecænar's of the age. Lady Di Beauclerk has drawn the portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire, and it has been engraved by Bartolozzi. A Castalian nymph conceived by Sappho, and executed by Myron, would not have had more grace and simplicity; it is the divinity of Venus piercing the veil of immortality, when

> roseâ cervice refulsit,
> Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
> Spiravere.

The likeness is perfectly preserved, except that the paintress has lent

her own expression to the Duchess, which you will allow is very agreeable flattery. What should I go to the Royal Academy for? I shall see no such *chefs d'œuvre* there.

1719. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.[1]

[1778.]

The purport of Dr. Robertson's visit was to inquire where he could find materials for the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, which he means to write as a supplement to David Hume. I had heard of his purpose, but did not own I knew it, that my discouragement might seem the more natural. I do not care a straw what he writes about the Church's wet-nurse, Goody Anne; but no Scot[2] is worthy of being the historian of William, but Dr. Watson.[3]

When he had told me his object, I said, "Write the reign of King William, Dr. Robertson! That is a great task! I look on him as the greatest man of modern times since his ancestor William Prince of Orange." I soon found the Doctor had very little idea of him, or had taken upon trust the pitiful partialities of Dalrymple and Macpherson. I said, "Sir, I do not doubt but King William came over with a view to the crown; nor was he called upon by patriotism, for he was not an Englishman, to assert our liberties. No; his patriotism was of a higher rank. He aimed not at the crown of England from ambition, but to employ its forces and wealth against Louis XIV. for the common cause of the liberties of Europe. The Whigs did not understand the extent of his views, and the Tories betrayed him. He has been thought not to have understood us; but the truth was, he took either party as it was predominant, that he might sway the Parliament to support his general plan." The Doctor, suspecting that I doubted his principles being enlarged enough to do justice to so great a character, told me he himself had been born and bred a Whig, though he owned he was *now* a moderate one: I believe, a very moderate one. I said Macpherson had done great injustice to another hero, the Duke of Marlborough,

[1] From Walpole's Works, vol. v., p. 651, but not included in Mr. Mitford's edition of the 'Correspondence of Walpole and Mason.'—Cunningham.

[2] Lord Orford changed his opinion upon this subject, after reading the accurate, impartial, and elegant history of Dr. Somerville, which he always declared to be the most faultless account yet given of any interesting period of our history; and added, that its perfect impartiality would ever prevent its being popular.—Berry.

[3] Dr. Watson's 'History of the Reign of Philip II. of Spain' was published, in two quarto volumes, in 1777.—Wright.

whom he accuses of betraying the design on Brest to Louis XIV. The truth was, as I heard often in my youth from my father, my uncle, and old persons who had lived in those times, that the Duke trusted the Duchess with the secret, and she her sister the popish Duchess of Tyrconnel, who was as poor and as bigoted as a church mouse. A corroboration of this was the wise and sententious answer of King William to the Duke, whom he taxed with having betrayed the secret. "Upon my honour, Sir," said the Duke, "I told it to nobody but my wife." "I did not tell it to mine!" said the King.

I added, that Macpherson's and Dalrymple's invidious scandals really serve but to heighten the amazing greatness of the King's genius; for, if they say true, he maintained the crown on his head, though the nobility, the churchmen, the country gentlemen, the people were against him; and though almost all his own Ministers betrayed him—"But," said I, "nothing is so silly as to suppose that the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin ever meant seriously to restore King James. Both had offended him too much to expect forgiveness, especially from so remorseless a nature. Yet a re-Revolution was so probable, that it is no wonder they kept up a correspondence with him, at least to break their fall if he returned. But as they never did effectuate the least service in his favour, when they had the fullest power, nothing can be inferred but King James's folly in continuing to lean on them. To imagine they meant to sacrifice his weak daughter, whom they governed absolutely, to a man who was sure of being governed by others, one must have as little sense as James himself had.

The precise truth I take to have been this. Marlborough and Godolphin both knew the meanness and credulity of James's character. They knew that he must be ever dealing for partisans; and they might be sure, that if he could hope for support from the General and the Lord-Treasurer, he must be less solicitous for more impotent supporters. "Is it impossible," said I to the Doctor, "but they might correspond with the King even by Anne's own consent? Do not be surprised, Sir," said I: "such things have happened. My own father often received letters from the Pretender, which he always carried to George II. and had them indorsed by his Majesty. I myself have seen them countersigned by the King's own hand."

In short, I endeavoured to impress him with proper ideas of his subject, and painted to him the difficulties, and the want of materials.

But the booksellers will out-argue me, and the Doctor will forget his education. *Panem et Circenses,* if you will allow me to use the latter for those that are captivated by favour in the *circle,* will decide his writing and give the colour. I once wished he should write the History of King William; but his 'Charles V.' and his 'America' have opened my eyes, and the times have shut his. Adieu!

1720. TO CHARLES BEDFORD, ESQ.[1]

DEAR SIR: *Strawberry Hill, April* 23, 1778.

I SHALL be much obliged to you if you will call to-morrow evening at the Somerset-house Coffee-house, and inquire into the truth of the enclosed advertisement; and if you find it a true case, I will beg you to pay what money is wanted, or the whole thirty-nine shillings if no other money has been sent. I will make you no excuse for giving you this trouble, as I am sure you will execute the commission with pleasure.

Yours sincerely,

H. W.

1721. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, April 23, 1778.

I THANK you, dear Sir, for the notice of William Le Worcestre's[2] appearance, and will send for my book as soon as I go to town, which will not be till next week. I have been here since Friday as much a hermit as yourself. I wanted air and quiet, having been much fatigued on my nephew's amendment, trying to dissuade him from making the campaign with his militia; but in vain! I now dread hearing of some eccentric freak. I am sorry Mr. Tyson has quite dropped me, though he sometimes comes to town. I am still more concerned at your frequent disorders—I hope their chief seat is unwillingness to move.

Your 'Bakeriana' will be very welcome about June: I shall not be completely resident here till then, at least not have leisure, as May is the month I have most visits from town. As few spare hours as

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] "Itineraria Symonis, Simeonis, et Willelmi de Worcestre." Cantab. 1778, 8vo.; edited by Dr. James Nasmith, who published the excellent Catalogue of MSS. which Archbishop Parker left to Corpus Christi College, at Cambridge.—WRIGHT.

I have, I have contrived to go through Mr. Pennant's 'Welsh Tour,' and Warton's second volume; both which come within the circle of your pursuits. I have far advanced, too, in Lord Hardwicke's first volume of 'State Papers.' I have yet found nothing that appears a new scene, or sets the old in a new light; yet they are rather amusing, though not in proportion to the bulk of the volumes. One likes to hear actors speak for themselves; but, on the other hand, they use a great many more words than are necessary: and when one knows the events from History, it is a little tiresome to go back to the details and the delays.

I should be glad to employ Mr. Essex on my Offices, but the impending war with France deters me. It is not a season for expense! I could like to leave my little castle complete; but, though I am only a spectator, I cannot be indifferent to the aspect of the times, as the country gentleman was, who was going out with his hounds as the two armies at Edge-hill were going to engage. I wish for peace and tranquillity, and should be glad to pass my remaining hours in the idle and retired amusements I love, and without any solicitude for my country. Adieu!

1722. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

May 6, 1778.

The space for the inscription on which your Lordship does me the honour of consulting me, I do not remember to have seen, and yet I am far from objecting to it, as it is quite in the *esprit du gothique*. The person, however, who drew it, is not correct, especially in his trefoils. He ought to copy the pattern exactly, of which there are many in Dart's Westminster or Canterbury. If the figures are painted, the arms must be so too; and then I should like to have the whole tomb enlivened with gold and azure. Mr. T. Pitt would sketch the Gothic part for your Lordship better than anybody, or so would Sandby next.

Pray do not give yourself the trouble, my dear Lord, this week of calling, unless you have a moment to-morrow, for I go to Strawberry on Friday. I would not take the liberty of mentioning to-morrow, if I had not something to show you, that I cannot bring to you, and that would pay your pains.

Your Lordship's most devoted,

H. Walpole.

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

1723. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 9, 1778.

As I have engaged myself to stock your impatience with frequent intelligence, you may think a month's interval a breach of promise; but though I write to display my diligence, it is not to convey any event. You yourself have told us all the fact we know; at least, the newspapers have done *you* the honour of sending the information of the sailing of the Toulon squadron—not in terms; but they say an express arrived from Sir H. Mann without eating, drinking, or sleeping; and we know nothing else—I mean we, the people,—that corresponds with the date of such importance. Pray can you tell whether our fleet is gone after it? For the newspapers would persuade us that Lord Sandwich has detained it at Portsmouth, to divert their Majesties, as if they loved shows better than dominions.

We shall be in no want of sights this summer: every county will have a camp of its own; the coasts will be amused with sieges. An American privateer[1] has attempted Whitehaven, and plundered Lord Selkirk's house. This is a little ungrateful, for the Americans certainly owe their independence to the Scots; though, to be sure, in strictness it was not what the Scots intended for them. They have done, or will do us some good too, though perhaps with as little design; for I think we shall be forced to come to our senses. Great countries ought always to be physicked and dieted after long peace or a course of victories; for prosperity either breeds humours in the body, or flies to the head: the first produce tumours, and the latter *absolute* madness.

Lord Chatham has been at the point of death, but is said to be better. It is not very likely, however, that he should recover enough to come forth again. You tell me his sister [Anne] is at Florence. Her friends, the Butes, have a new calamity in their family, for which I pity them: Lady Percy is *enceinte*, and the suit for a divorce is commenced.[2] Lady Bute has been very unfortunate in her children, though there never was a better or more discreet mother. Lady Percy is very weak; and some time ago, when

[1] Paul Jones.—Cunningham.

[2] Earl Percy first married, in July 1764, Lady Anne Stuart, third daughter of the Earl of Bute; by whom he had no issue, and from whom he was divorced in May, 1779. In the same year, he married Frances-Julia, third daughter of the late Peter Burrell, Esq., and sister to Lord Gwydir.—Wright.

Lady Bute received some intimation on her conduct, she said, "Upon my word, I have not room in my head for that misfortune!"

Though I write this on the Saturday, it cannot depart till Tuesday. Probably, I shall have little to add. Next month will be more prolific of intelligence. Yet make no account of my auguries. I have lived too long, and have been too often mistaken in my calculations, to trust my own reason or that of others. Half our conjectures are built on Ignorance, and her sister Chance governs the rest

My mind is a little one, and apt to fluctuate. I answer for nothing but my principles, and never committed them to the guidance of events; so, though my letters may have been affected by the weather-glass, the sum total has been uniform. I have hoped or feared; but always in the same spirit—the liberty and happiness of England.

Arlington Street, 11*th.*

I must unsay a material passage in my letter: Lord Chatham died this morning! I am of opinion that Lord Temple died at the same moment, or had better think he did. We shall have opportunities of seeing whether the mantle of the former is descended upon anybody! Lord Shelburne will probably pretend that it was a legacy to him; but, without Lord Chatham's *fortune* too, a *cloak* will be of little use. Well! with all his defects, Lord Chatham will be a capital historic figure. France dreaded his crutch to this very moment; but I doubt she does not think that it has left a stick of the wood!—no offence to Mrs. Anne [Pitt], who, I allow, has great parts, and not less ambition: but *Fortune* did not treat her as a twin.

Tuesday morning.

Last night the House of Commons voted a funeral and monument to Lord Chatham at the public expense, and the members are to walk at the buria..

1724. TO H. R. H. THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.

May 10, 1778.

I DO assure you, Madam, your Royal Highness is totally mistaken about Lord Ch[ewton?], whom I have not seen this month. I received my account from no relation or friend, but from a gentleman of the strictest honour, who came to me as not knowing else how to convey the information to you. I will upon no account name him, as I gave him my word I would not. I am extremely happy there is no

truth in the idea, though it came to me in so serious a manner and from a man so incapable of an ill-meaning, that it was my duty to acquaint you with it; and as I desired to be named to your daughters, they will know how kind my intention was, and that I am, as I have professed to them, as affectionate as if I was their father.

I shall be very glad, Madam, of your brother's picture, and will try to find a place for it; but it is far from being the only near relation of whom I have no portrait—I have none of Lord Dysart, of the Bishop [of Exeter], of Lady Malpas, of Mr. and Mrs. Cholmondeley, of Lady Cadogan, &c.—and therefore the remark of the persons that observed your brother's being wanting, was not very good-natured to him or me. Many of the family pictures I happened to have; others I begged as I wanted them for particular places; and, indeed, furnished my house to please myself, not to please such people as those who have been so obliging as to tell your Royal Highness that my not having your brother's picture was a mark of contempt. I have no desire of pleasing those who were capable of saying such a thing to you. Your affection for his memory is most amiable, and I shall obey you with pleasure; but allow me to say, Madam, that I hope you will always judge of me by what you know of me, and not from comments of others. I have been taxed with partiality for *you*, long before there was a question of your present rank; nor do I believe you suspect me of attachment to you from that motive. I am too old, too independent, and too contented, to have hopes or fears from anybody. I have the highest respect for his Royal Highness's character and virtues, and always shall have; and am proud of paying my court to him, when it can only flow from personal reverence. Were he in the situation he ought to be, I should be but the less anxious to show it.

Indeed I little expected to be suspected of wanting attachment to any part of my family. I have been laughed at, perhaps deservedly, for family pride, which certainly is not always a proof of family affection. I trust I have given proofs that they are not disunited in me; and yet, except from my father, I never received either benefits or favours; and from him only my places, and a small fortune not paid. Thus, whatever I have, except my share of Mr. Shorter's fortune[1] that came to me by his leaving no will, and consequently was no obligation, I neither received from my family

[1] See vol i., p. lxvii.—CUNNINGHAM.

nor owe to it. It has been saved by my own prudence, is my own to dispose of as I please, and, however I distribute it, or to whom, will be a gift, not a claim.

I should not say thus much, Madam, but when any one can think it worth while to make invidious remarks to you on a tender point with you, on what is or is not in my house, you will allow me to justify myself, and even open my heart to you, to whom I desire it should be known, though I certainly owe no account to anybody on so trifling a subject as the furniture of a house which I am master to do what I please with, living or dead. It was from no disregard for your brother that I had not his picture. I love Lady Cadogan very much, as I do, surely, your daughters and nieces, yet have not happened to have their pictures: and though I have probably said a great deal too much, like an old man, it is always a mark of affection when I submit myself on an unjust accusation; and as tenderness for my family is the duty in which I have in my whole life been the least culpable, though very blamable in a thousand other respects, it is very pardonable to be circumstantial and prolix to her whose reproach was kind and good, and whom I desire to convince that I have neither wanted affection for my family, nor am unjust to it. I have the honour to be, Madam, your Royal Highness's most faithful, humble servant.

1725. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 12, 1778.

I NOW and then write a letter for, rather than to, you; that is, when they will bear delay, and be equally fresh, and when they contain anecdotes that I do not care to send by the post if they are too personal, and I have not a prospect of sudden conveyance. The following will have all these ingredients, and will rather be an epitome of the manners of the time, than a letter. The characteristics of the age are frenzy, folly, extravagance, and insensibility; no wonder when such stars are predominant, that Ruin both stalks on, and is not felt or apprehended.

About ten days ago, I wanted a housemaid, and one presented herself very well recommended. I said, "But, young woman, why do you leave your present place?" She said she could not support the hours she kept; that her lady never went to bed till three or four in the morning. "Bless me, child," said I, "why, you tell me

you live with a bishop's wife: I never heard that Mrs. North[1] gamed or raked so late." "No, Sir," said she, "but she is three hours undressing." Upon my word, the edifice that takes three hours to demolish, must at least be double the time in fabricating! Would not you for once sit up till morning to see the destruction of the Pyramid and distribution of the materials? Do not mention this, for I did not take the girl, and she still assists at the daily and nightly revolutions of Babel.

On Tuesday I supped after the Opera at Mrs. Meynel's with a set of the most fashionable company, which, take notice, I very seldom do now, as I certainly am not of the age to mix often with young people. Lady Melbourne[2] was standing before the fire, and adjusting her feathers in the glass, says she, "Lord! they say the stocks will blow up: that will be very comical."

These would be features for Comedy, if they would not be thought caricatures, but to-day I am possessed of a genuine paper, that I believe I shall leave to the Museum, and which, though its object will, I suppose, to-morrow become record, cannot be believed authentic an hundred years hence. It would in such a national satire as Gulliver be deemed too exaggerated. In short, Lord Foley and his brother have petitioned the House of Lords to set aside their father's Will, as it seems he intended to have raised an hundred thousand pounds to pay their debts, but died before he could execute his intention. All the Ladies' Melbournes, and all the Bishops' wives that kill their servants by vigils are going about the town lamenting these poor orphans, and soliciting the peers to redress their grievances; but no words, no ridicule, can attain to the ridiculous pathetic of the printed case itself, which now lies before me, and of which the four first lines are these—upon my honour they are exactly these:—

"The present Lord Foley and his brother Mr. Edward Foley having contracted large bond debts to the amount of about —*l.*, and encumbered themselves by granting annuities for their lives to the amount of about seventeen thousand four hundred and fifty pounds a *year*, explained their situation to their father the late Lord——."

Poor unfortunate children! before thirty, the eldest had spent an

[1] Wife of the Hon. Brownlow North, at this time Bishop of Worcester. He died in 1820 Bishop of Winchester.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Ralph Milbanke, of Halnaby, Bart., wife of the first Viscount Melbourne (died 1828), and mother of Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister. She died in 1818.—CUNNINGHAM.

estate (to the possession of which he was not arrived) of twenty thousand a year; at least, forfeited his father's affections, who left him but six thousand a year and a palace; and the youngest brother had been dipped in the same extravagance with him, and the legislature is desired to set aside so just a punishment, and if it does will deserve that every lad in England should waste his father's estate before his face. Tell it not in Gath, where all the shekels that ever were in the country would give no idea of the debt, though Jews are the creditors! Burn your sermon instead of printing it. Do you think you can preach up to the enormities of the times? Hyperbole is baffled, and if the fine ladies of Jerusalem were so gallant that the prophets were obliged to pass all bounds of decency in censuring Duchess Aholah and Countess Aholibah, where would they have found figures even in eastern rhetoric to paint the enormity of two sons *explaining to their father* that they paid seventeen thousand pounds a year to usurers for money they had borrowed to pay gaming debts? and what tropes, what metaphors drawn from asses would describe a sanhedrim that suffered such a petition to be laid before it?

These have been my collections in a single fortnight in the flagrancy of a civil war. History shall not revert to Athens for decrees against diverting the revenues of the theatre to the service of the state. London shall be the storehouse hereafter, whence declamations shall be drawn on the infatuation of falling empires. Nay, so potent is the intoxication, that in two companies this evening I have been thought singular for seeing *this petition* in the light I do: at York perhaps I may not be held so antediluvian in my opinions. With such obsolete prejudices I certainly am not very proper at modern suppers, yet with such *entremets* one would not wholly miss them. Nations at the acme of their splendour, or at the eve of their destruction, are worth observing. When they grovel in obscurity afterwards, they furnish neither events nor reflections; strangers visit the vestiges of the Acropolis, or may come to dig for capitals among the ruins of St. Paul's; but nobody studies the manners of the pedlars and banditti, that dwell in mud huts within the precincts of a demolished temple. Curio and Clodius are memorable as they paved the way to the throne of Cæsar, but equal scoundrels are not entitled to infamy after a constitution is overturned. What we shall retain, I do not conjecture. The constitution might recover—the nation cannot; but though its enemies have miscarried in their attacks on the former, is there sense or virtue

enough left to restore it, though the assailants have betrayed such wretched, despicable incapacity? Unless sudden inspiration should seize the whole island, and make it with one voice invite Dr. Franklin to come over and new model the government, it will crumble away in the hands that still hold it. They feel, they own their insufficiency. Everybody is sensible of it, and everybody seems to think, like Lady Melbourne, that if we are blown up it will be very comical.

1726. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 15, 1778.

I HAVE gulped my anger at your silence, or at least adjourned it till I have less disposition to speak, that I may chat with you on all that has happened since I wrote last Saturday. The first thing I heard on landing in Arlington Street was Lord Chatham's death, which in truth I thought of no great consequence, but to himself; for either he would have remained where he was, or been fetched out to do what he could not do,—replace us once more on the throne of Neptune. The House of Commons has chosen to make his death an epoch, which is to draw the line between our prosperity and adversity. They bury him, and father his children. In this fit of gratitude two men chose not to be involved, but voted against attending his funeral; one was the Archbishop of Canterbury [Cornwallis], who owed the tiara to him; the other, Lord Onslow,[1] who formerly used to wait in the lobby to help him on with his great-coat.

Yesterday teemed with events: a compromise on the Irish bills was made and broken. Then Sir George Saville moved for taking off pressures from the Roman Catholics, which charmed every soul on both sides; and I suppose the Papists will soon be admitted *ad eundem*.

Next arrived General Burgoyne. I don't know whether he was surprised or not, but he received a prohibition of appearing at Court; and a Board of General Officers is appointed to sit on his conduct. Luckily we have enough to spare, though French and Spaniards should land in twenty places; for next came an account of Marshal Broglio being appointed Commander-in-chief on the coasts of the ocean. The *ubi* of the Toulon squadron is

[1] George Onslow, Earl of Onslow, died 1814.—CUNNINGHAM.

not ascertained. That of Brest has thirty frigates, and the Spanish ten thousand men on board, so you may prophesy at your pleasure.

I say nothing of an interlude which nobody has leisure to think on, and is a great way off in a certain little empire we have, or had, called India, where Mr. Hastings had deposed General Clavering by the plenitude of his power before the latter's death.

I thought these accidents were sufficient for one week, and came out of town this morning as tranquilly as if I were a minister; so I hold my own philosophy full as high as any stoic in Yorkshire. It does require some command of temper to sit still and see a general wreck approaching,—I mean for one that expects and thinks on it. I know I might go to Ranelagh, and Newmarket, and exhibitions, and say, with Pope,

Whatever is, is right.

But I am forced to seek other consolations; and as I have not the spirits of youth, I have recourse to age, and comfort myself that my time cannot be long whether I survive my country or the constitution, the former of which is alternately shaken or attempted to be propped by experiments on the latter; but it is idle to dream on old maxims. A great convulsion is at hand, and new eras find new levels. Old folks should not trouble themselves with great epochs at the end of their lives, but set themselves apart till they are swept to the ancient mass to which they belonged.

I have long taken my doctor's degree in Strulbruggism, and wonder I concern myself about the affairs of the living. Good night! I will go and converse with the dead.

1727. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 16, 1778.

As a Goth, as a respecter of princes of the name of William, and as uncle of one of that name, I certainly shall not refuse my mite to the re-enshrinement of the bones of poor William of Hatfield. I will willingly be at the whole expense, if you will take care I shall have no honour from it, as I hate crowding one's name into Fame's account-book, by bringing her in a bill for stone and mortar. You shall have his Royal Highness's arms too, and anything but the epitaph. I have neither time nor understanding left for writing anything. My nephew's situation will employ and poison all my

leisure; and were it not my way to occupy every minute, I could not go through half I have to do, and all I wish to do I leave undone. If I forget Prince William's arms, you must put me in mind.

In all my trouble I cannot be forgetful of you. Here is come out a paltry Supplement to Hume's 'Life,' with his Will, a supplement to his vanity. He modestly orders only his name to be mentioned on his tomb, but appoints posterity his executors, and requires them to write an epitaph setting forth his great abilities according to the high opinion they will have of them. *Voilà un Philosophe.* The editor grossly abuses you for what I hope you glory in, the publication of Gray's 'Letters;' in particular that which censures Hume, which the fool calls illiberal. By Hume's own account of himself he attacked all religion, in order to be talked of. It is *illiberal* in a very moral man to be shocked at Atheism! This is Scotch morality! The condemnation of Gray's 'Letters' is Scotch taste! The whole nation hitherto has been void of wit and humour, and even incapable of relishing it. The dull editor says, Gray never thought his letters would see the light. He does not perceive how much that circumstance enhances their merit: I do not wonder he is insensible of their charming beauties. Nobody yet ever wrote letters so well, and his earliest have more marks of genius than his latest. Your crime does not lie in what you have given of Gray but of yourself. The Scots like to wound with another man's dagger: you will only smile at their impotence. I wish they could only stab with their pens,—

> The grey-goose quill that is thereon,
> In no man's blood will be wet.

I know no news. You have seen the Speaker's remonstrance, and how ably Charles Fox made the House adopt it, and consequently the condemnation of their own act.

I have seen Sheridan's new comedy ['The School for Scandal'], and liked it much better than any I have seen since 'The Provoked Husband.' There is a great deal of wit and good situations, but it is too long, has two or three bad scenes that might easily be omitted, and seemed to me to want nature and truth of character; but I have not read it, and sat too high to hear it well. It is admirably acted. Burke has published a pamphlet on the American War, and an Apology for his own secession and that of his friends. I have not had time to look at it, but I do not believe I shall agree with him on

the latter part so much as on the first. Do not return me the 'Incas;' I shall never read it. I hear your 'Garden' was criticised in the 'Morning Post.' Continue to plant

Flowers worthy of paradise,—

and do not mind their being trampled on in such a soil as this. Adieu! I wish I had leisure to chat with you longer.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 24, 1778.

I HAVE got a quire of much smaller paper than I formerly used, though not quite so small as that you write letters upon, and I am in great hopes it will make me a much more punctual correspondent to you and the rest of my friends; for when a man has nothing to say (which is usually my case) there is nothing so formidable as seeing a huge quarto page, big enough for the types of a Scotch historian, lie before one in expectation of being filled. I know I have frequently taken one of those out of my *porte feuille* and put it in again through pure disgust at its magnitude. Pray, who is your stationer? His Majesty has been mine a great while (through the mediation of Mr. Auditor Stonhewer); but I'll turn him off, and take yours; and yet, when one considers that it is the only thing by which he has ever benefited me, or will be likely to benefit me, this would be quarrelling with one's bread and butter.

Thus the apologetical first page, the most difficult to write in a whole letter, is fairly filled, and the second begun. Shall I fill this with a threnody on the two Earls[2] which have lately left my stationer in the lurch? Their characters are too dissimilar to be hitched into the same rhymes, and yet they both agreed in one virtue,—that of a most profound loyalty. The latter of these, with whom only I was acquainted, lamented the republican spirit that was abroad, in the last conference I had with him. I did not ask him what he meant by it, because I was sure he could not tell me. But are you not charmed with the Cavendishes getting up to praise the dead statesman? whom I know they hated as cordially as the King hates them. I always thought Lord John rather a modest man till this event. And are not you charmed too with the political wisdom of Sir George Saville, who chooses this very moment to indispose the whole body of Dissenters towards him and his party by rising up the champion of the Papists. Bad as I esteem the reigning Ministry, I actually like them better than the Opposition,—I mean the Rockingham part of it; and yet all my friends are included in that part.

Pray, give me an account of the funeral,[3] and if you have time, order your gardener to pluck a bouquet of onions, and send it with my compliments to Lord John, that he may put them in his handkerchief to weep with greater facility. I am sick of my friends, my country, and myself. They say we are to be invaded; I am as impatient to be so as the old nun in the 'Pucelle' was to be violated: well; but if we are not invaded, will you meet me in a little time at Nuneham? I mean to go there the middle of next month, and stay till August. I had once thought of passing through town; but the absence of my curate [Mr. Alderson] I believe will prevent me; for he is now setting off with Lord H[oldernesse]'s corpse to Hornby, and is to return to town to settle some affairs relative to the lease of Sion Hill[4] with the Duke of

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[2] The great Earl of Chatham, who died on the 12th May, 1778, and the Earl of Holdernesse (Mason's patron), who died on the 16th May, 1778.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Of the Earl of Chatham, in Westminster Abbey.—CUNNINGHAM.

[4] In the parish of Isleworth: a house built by Lord Holdernesse, and afterwards inhabited by the Duke of Marlborough.—CUNNINGHAM.

1728. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, May 21, 1778.

I WILL not flatter you: I was not in the least amused with either Simon, Simeon, or William of Wyrcestre. If there was anything tolerable in either, it was the part omitted, or the part I did not read, which was the Journey to Jerusalem, about which I have not the smallest curiosity. I thank you for mentioning 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' which I sent for.

Mr. Essex has called upon me, and left me the drawing of a bridge, with which I am perfectly pleased, but I was unluckily out of town; he left no direction, and I know not where to seek him in this overgrown bottle of hay. I still hope he will call again before his return.

May not I, should not I, wish you joy on the restoration of popery?[1] I expect soon to see Capuchins tramping about, and Jesuits *in high places*. We are relapsing fast to our pristine state, and have nothing but our island, and our old religion.

Mr. Nasmith's publication directed me to the MSS. in Bene't Library, which I did not know was printed. I found two or three from which I should be glad to have transcripts, and would willingly pay for; but I left the book at Strawberry, and must trouble you another time with that commission.

The City wants to bury Lord Chatham in St. Paul's; which, as a person said to me this morning, would literally be "robbing Peter to pay Paul."[2] I wish it could be so, that there might be some decoration in that nudity, *en attendant* the re-establishment of

Northumberland. You may well believe that I can contentedly stay here, when I reflect that a great part of the trouble and attendance that now falls upon him would have been my lot had things been as they once were. But my little quarto page happily releases you from more of my prate, and leaves me no room to say how much I am yours,

W. MASON.

You talked in your last of a letter you had written last Saturday: I hope you was only *ironing*, for I have only received one since I came hither from York.

[1] Walpole alludes to the bill for the relief of the Roman Catholics, which released their priests from prosecution, and allowed members of that religion to purchase lands and take them by descent. It passed both Houses without opposition.—WRIGHT.

[2] Robbing Westminster Abbey, or the monastery of St. Peter's, Westminster.—CUNNINGHAM.

various altars. It is not my design to purchase the new edition of the 'Biographia;' I trust they will give the old purchasers the additions as a supplement. I had corrected the errata of the press throughout my copy, but I could not take the trouble of transcribing them, nor could lend them the originals, as I am apt to scribble notes in the margins of all my books that interest me at all.[1] Pray let me know if 'Baker's Life' is among the additions, and whether you are satisfied with it, as there could not be events enough in his retired life to justify two accounts of it.

There are no new *old news*, and you care for nothing within the memory of man. I am always intending to draw up an account of my intercourse with Chatterton, which I take very kindly you remind me of, but some avocation or other has still prevented it. My perfect innocence of having indirectly been an ingredient in his dismal fate, which happened two years after our correspondence, and after he had exhausted both his resources and his constitution, have made it more easy to prove that I never saw him, knew nothing of his ever being in London, and was the first person, instead of the last, on whom he had practised his impositions, and founded his chimeric hopes of promotion. My very first, or at least second letter, undeceived him in those views, and our correspondence was broken off before he quitted his master's business at Bristol, so that his disappointment with me was but his first ill success; and he resented my incredulity so much, that he never condescended to let me see him. Indeed, what I have said now to you, and which cannot be controverted by a shadow of a doubt, would be sufficient vindication. I could only add to the proofs, a vain regret of never having known his distresses, which his amazing genius would have tempted me to relieve, though I fear he had no other claim to compassion. Mr. Warton has said enough to open the eyes of every one who is not greatly prejudiced to his forgeries. Dr. Milles is one who will not make a bow to Dr. Percy for not being as wilfully blind as himself, but when he gets a beam in his eye that he takes for an antique truth, there is no persuading him to submit to be couched. Adieu!

[1] So much was this a custom with him, that I will repeat my regret that his library at Strawberry Hill was ever scattered.—Cunningham.

1729. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

My Dear Lord, *May* 26, 1778.

As the weather is as fine as it is likely to be till the summer is gone, and as you have flattered me with the honour of a visit, may I ask if Sunday or Monday next will be agreeable to your Lordship and Lady Harcourt, or what other day before you go out of town to pull [*sic*] your own house?

Your Lordship's most devoted,
H. Walpole.

P.S. If you did not give yourself inland airs, you would wait to rebuild your house, till the French had burnt it down. I trust to the talisman of King William's spurs.

1730. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1778.

I am glad you have deigned to answer me at last, for there is no conversation when only one talks. I was almost sorry that I had not begged you to order your executor to send me word you was dead, and that I need not write any more. But, my good friend, you are full as great a contradiction as Lord John [Cavendish], or any Catholic Whig upon earth. You write once in a quarter, and yet complain of my small paper. I fixed upon this little quarto for substantial reasons. I am too apt to write too much to those I love, and prescribed myself this size that I might not weary them, and it holds all one has to say to those one loves not, and yet seems to contain a decent quantity.

I should like to accept the assignation you give me, and will if I have the least encouragement, but I have had no invitation; and though I do not at all know why, am a little suspicious of not being in the most perfect favour. As this is by no means positive, I take no notice, because it is not at all on my side, and that it shall revive whenever it pleases, as my regard is just the same. If we should not meet I think you cannot refuse coming to me for a few days.

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

Consider, I have turned that corner beyond which every hour is *lucrum*, and that I and every body else think I have lived long enough; though I am not so old as Sam. Martin counts me. The talisman [Lord Holdernesse] is removed that prohibited your access to this part of the world, though surely Twickenham is a kind of country to so near a relation of Pope as you are by the side of your Virgin-Mothers. Let me have the satisfaction of seeing you here, whither very few are pressed to come. We have a thousand things to talk over, and are almost reduced to be the only two of the same opinion; for what those you call your friends mean, indeed I do not guess—it is most charitable to think they have no meaning. I used to fancy that calamity would bring us to our senses—it must bring our senses too. The two alternatives now are desolation, or a shameful peace: bankruptcy with either, only a little nearer, or a little farther off. It is actually come out on the agitation of the changes in the law, that at 60*l.* per commission, the Chancellor reaped seven thousand pounds last year by bankruptcies! Those changes were to have taken place last Thursday, but I do not hear they did. Thurlow is to be Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, I do not know which. Wedderburn sits down with the Attorney's place, a disappointment and I suppose a full promise. Norton threatened to impeach him if Peered, for telling the Chief Justice that Lord North would pay him out of the Treasury seven thousand pounds for the prothonotary's reversion. Thus justice makes a rope of one rogue, instead of using two ropes.

I shall certainly not go to the funeral. I go to no puppet-shows, nor want to see Lord Chatham's water-gall Lord Temple hobble chief mourner. I scarce inquire after the House of Commons, which is a scene of folly and Billingsgate. Burgoyne has tried to be the pathetic hero, and was forgotten for three hours, while Temple Luttrell[1] and Lord G. Germaine scolded like two oyster-women: the first tried to be sent to Newgate, and the latter grasped his sword, and then asked pardon for having been grossly affronted. Lord Barrington implored Madam his Country's tears for declaring he was retiring from her service to virtuous privacy. It is a pity she did not order him to be buried at the public expense. Lord Sandwich has run the gauntlet in the Lords for all the lies he has told all the winter about the fleet, and does not retire; but I am sick

[1] The Hon. Temple Luttrell (brother of the Duchess of Cumberland), married, 1778, to a daughter of Judge Gould.—CUNNINGHAM.

of repeating what you must be sick of reading. An invasion will have some dignity; but to see a great country gambol at the eve of ruin like a puppy on a precipice! Oh! one cannot buffoon like Lucian when one wants to speak daggers like Tacitus, and couch them in a sentence without descending to details.

I had rather talk on less interesting subjects, and will tell you a good *bon-mot*. *Marie à la Coque* [Lady Mary Coke] has had an outrageous quarrel with Miss Pelham on politics, or rather at Miss Pelham, who did not reply. This occasioned Lady Mary's notes being mentioned, which she signs as Duchess of York, "Marye" (the *e* passing for a flourish), if you do not go to law with her. On this, Burke said to Miss P. "Upon my word you will be a match for her if you sign 'Frances P.'"

There was more humour in a reply of Lady Harrington's t'other day. Mrs. St. John had asked Lady Anna Maria[1] to a ball without her mother, who would not let her go. The next time they met Lady Harrington made excuses, but said she never allowed her daughter to go to balls without her. Mrs. St. John replied, as her Ladyship suffered her to go to the Opera without her, she had hoped she would not have been more strict about a private dancing. Instead of knocking her down, as might have been expected, Lady Harrington looked her all over, and then with a face melted to compassion, said in a soft voice, and very slowly, "Mrs. St. John, if you *could* have a child, I am sure you would think as I do!" Imagine this addressed to a porpoise covered with flowers and feathers!

But I would in vain divert you, I do not feel cheerful, though, as I told you in a former letter, I had rather see my country humbled than insolently enslaved. Nay, I think with comfort on a time which I shall not see, when the absurdity of the present age will be painted in its true colours. The mind never rests on the unhappy point: it prefers a non-existent scene to disagreeable sensations. I feel my own folly. Were I to leave England as happy or as glorious as I have known it, would it always remain so? Is not it enough that the mischief is falling on the heads of its authors? What period equalled the disgraces of the last six or eight months? Shall the innocent mix sighs with the guilty? Who will doubt where the blame is due? All the Robertsons and Humes of the Highlands cannot whitewash the four last years;

[1] Lady Anna Maria Stanhope, born 1760; married, first, 1782, the third Duke of Newcastle, and secondly, 1800, Sir Charles Cregan Crawfurd, G.C.B.—CUNNINGHAM.

nor, which is more delightful, can they plunder and disgrace America, as their chiefs have undone England. Seven James's were not worse politicians than the whole nation is; nor is there a more indelible mark of reprobation on the Jews. I would fain persuade myself that the seeds of tyranny will not thrive in this country, though all the inhabitants sow them. Every attempt chokes the seedsman: I hope we shall be a proverb, as Ireland is, for not producing venomous animals!

Remember that if I write on small paper I write a very small hand, and that this very letter would make forty, if I scrawled a large character like Dukes and old Earls, who allow as much room to every word as to their coach-and-six. I don't want news, but you can say nothing that I shall not be glad to read.

1731. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1778.

I AM forced to look at the dates I keep of my letters, to see what events I have or have not told you; for at this crisis something happens every day; though nothing very striking since the death of Lord Chatham, with which I closed my last. No?—yes, but there has. All England, which had abandoned him, found out, the moment his eyes were closed, that nothing but Lord Chatham could have preserved them. How lucky for him that the experiment cannot be made! Grief is fond, and grief is generous. The Parliament will bury him; the City begs the honour of being his grave; and the important question is not yet decided, whether he is to lie at Westminster or in St. Paul's; on which it was well said, that it would be "robbing Peter to pay Paul." An annuity of four thousand pounds is settled on the title of Chatham, and twenty thousand pounds allotted to pay his debts. The Opposition and the Administration disputed zeal; and neither care a straw about him. He is already as much forgotten as John of Gaunt.

General Burgoyne has succeeded and been the topic, and for two days engrossed the attention of the House of Commons; and probably will be heard of no more. He was even forgotten for three hours while he was on the tapis, by a violent quarrel between Temple Luttrell (a brother of the Duchess of Cumberland) and Lord George Germaine; but the public has taken affection for neither them nor the General: being much more disposed at present

ANNE LUTTRELL. - Mrs HORTON.

London Richard Bentley & Son 1

to hate than to love—except the dead. It will be well if the ill-humour, which increases, does not break out into overt acts.

I know not what to say of war. The Toulon squadron was certainly blown back. That of Brest is supposed to be destined to invade some part of this country or Ireland; or rather, it is probable, will attempt our fleet. In my own opinion, there is no great alacrity in France—I mean, in the Court of France—for war; and, as we have had time for great preparations, their eagerness will not increase. We shall suffer as much as they can desire by the loss of America, without their risk, and in a few years shall be able to give them no umbrage; especially as our frenzy is still so strong, that, if France left us at quiet, I am persuaded we should totally exhaust ourselves in pursuing the vision of reconquest. Spain continues to disclaim hostility, as you told me. If the report is true of revolts in Mexico, they would be as good as a bond under his Catholic Majesty's hand.

We shall at least not doze, as we are used to do, in summer. The Parliament is to have only short adjournments; and our senators, instead of retiring to horse-races (*their* plough), are all turned soldiers, and disciplining militia. Camps everywhere, and the ladies in the uniform of their husbands! In short, if the dose is not too strong, a little adversity would not be quite unseasonable.—A little! you will cry; why what do you call the loss of America? Oh! my dear sir, do you think a capital as enormous as London has its nerves affected by what happens beyond the Atlantic? What has become of all your reading? There is nothing so unnatural as the feelings of a million of persons who live together in one city. They have not one conception like those in villages and in the country. They presume or despond from quite different motives. They have both more sense and less, than those who are not in contact with a multitude. Wisdom forms empires, but folly dissolves them; and a great capital, which dictates to the rest of the community, is always the last to perceive the decays of the whole, because it takes its own greatness for health.[1]

Lord Holdernesse is dead; not quite so considerable a personage as he once expected to be, though Nature never intended him for anything that he was. The Chancellor, another child of Fortune, quits the Seals; and they are, or are to be, given to the Attorney-

[1] When Constantinople was taken by Mahomet II., the whole empire of the East had been long reduced to the capital itself.—WALPOLE.

General, Thurlow, whom nobody will reproach with want of abilities.

As the Parliament will rise on Tuesday, you will not expect my letters so frequently as of late, especially if hostilities do not commence. In fact, our newspapers tell you everything faster than I can: still I write, because you have more faith in my intelligence; yet all its merit consists in my not telling you fables. I hear no more than everybody does, but I send you only what is sterling; or, at least, give you reports for no more than they are worth. I believe Sir John Dick is much more punctual, and hears more; but, till you displace me, I shall execute my office of being your gazetteer.

1732. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 3, 1778.

I WILL not dispute with you, dear Sir, on patriots and politics. One point is past controversy, that the Ministers have ruined this country; and if the Church of England is satisfied with being reconciled with the Church of Rome, and thinks it a compensation for the loss of America and all credit in Europe, she is as silly an old woman as any granny in an almshouse. France is very glad we are grown such fools, and soon saw that the Presbyterian Dr. Franklin[1] had more sense than our Ministers together. She has got over all her prejudices, has expelled the Jesuits, and made the Protestant Swiss, Necker, her comptroller-general. It is a little woful, that we are relapsing into the nonsense the rest of Europe is shaking off! and it is more deplorable, as we know by repeated experience, that this country has always been disgraced by Tory administrations. The rubric is the only gainer by them in a few martyrs.

I do not know yet what is settled about the spot of Lord Chatham's interment. I am not more an enthusiast to his memory than you. I knew his faults and his defects—yet one fact cannot only not be controverted, but I think more remarkable every day—I mean, that under him we attained not only our highest elevation, but the most solid authority in Europe. When the names of Marlborough and Chatham are still pronounced with awe in France, our little

[1] Dr. Benjamin Franklin, and Silas Deane, were publicly received at the Court of France, as ambassadors from America, in the preceding March.—WRIGHT.

cavils make a puny sound. Nations that are beaten cannot be mistaken.

I have been looking out for your friend a set of my heads of Painters, and I find I want six or seven. I think I have some odd ones in town; if I have not, I will have deficiencies supplied from the plates, though I fear they will not be good, as so many have been taken off. I should be very ungrateful for all your kindnesses, if I neglected any opportunity of obliging you, dear Sir. Indeed, our old and unalterable friendship is creditable to us both, and very uncommon between two persons who differ so much in their opinions relative to Church and State. I believe the reason is, that we are both sincere, and never meant to take advantage of our principles; which I allow is too common on both sides, and I own, too, fairly more common on my side of the question than on yours. There is a reason, too, for that; the honours and emoluments are in the gift of the Crown; the nation has no separate treasury to reward its friends.

If Mr. Tyrwhitt[1] has opened his eyes to Chatterton's forgeries, there is an instance of conviction against strong prejudice! I have drawn up an Account of my transaction with that marvellous young man; you shall see it one day or other, but I do not intend to print it.[2] I have taken a thorough dislike to being an author; and if it would not look like begging you to compliment me, by contradicting me, I would tell you, what I am most seriously convinced of, that I find what small share of parts I had, grown dulled—and when I perceive it myself, I may well believe that others would not be less sharp-sighted. It is very natural; mine were spirits rather than parts; and as time has abated the one, it must surely destroy their resemblance to the other: pray don't say a syllable in reply on this head, or I shall have done exactly what I said I would not do. Besides, as you have always been too partial to me, I am on my guard, and when I will not expose myself to my enemies, I must not listen to the prejudices of my friends; and as nobody is more partial to me than you, there is nobody I must trust less in that respect. Yours most sincerely.

[1] Thomas Tyrwhitt, the learned editor of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, considered one of the best edited books in the English language, had, on the appearance of the Rowley Poems, believed them genuine; but being afterwards convinced of the contrary, he did not hesitate to avow his conviction.—Wright.

[2] 'A Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton,' dated 'Strawberry Hill, May 23, 1778,' of which Walpole, next year, printed 200 copies, and gave them away.—Cunningham.

1738. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1778.

I AM as impatient and in as much hurry as you was, dear Sir, to clear myself from the slightest intention of censuring your politics. I know the sincerity and disinterested goodness of your heart, and when I must be convinced how little certain we are all of what is truth, it would be very presumptuous to condemn the opinions of any good man, and still less an old and unalterable friend, as I have ever found you. The destruction that violent arbitrary principles have drawn on this blinded country has moved my indignation. We never were a great and happy country till the Revolution. The system of these days tended to overturn, and has overturned, that establishment, and brought on the disgraces that ever attended the foolish and wicked councils of the house of Stuart. If man is a rational being, he has a right to make use of his reason, and to enjoy his liberty. We, we alone almost had a constitution that every other nation upon earth envied or ought to envy. This is all I contend for. I will give you up whatever descriptions of men you please; that is, the leaders of parties, not the principles. These cannot change, those generally do, when power falls into the hands of them or their party, because men are corruptible, which truth is not. But the more the leaders of a party dedicated to liberty are apt to change, the more I adore the principle, because it shows that extent of power is not to be trusted even with those that are the most sensible of the value of liberty. Man is a domineering animal; and it has not only been my principle, but my practice, too, to quit everybody at the gate of the palace. I trust we shall not much differ on these outlines, but we will bid adieu to the subject: it is never an agreeable one to those who do not mean to make a trade of it.

I heartily wish you may not find the pontiff what I think the order, and what I know him, if you mean the high-priest of Ely.[1] He is all I have been describing and worse; and I have too good an opinion of you, to believe that he will ever serve you.

What I said of disclaiming authorship by no means alluded to Mr. Baker's Life. It would be enough that you desire it, for me to undertake it. Indeed, I am inclined to it because he was what you and I are, a party-man from principle, not from interest: and he, who was

[1] Dr. Edmund Keene. See vol. ii. p. 318, and vol. iii. p. 314.—CUNNINGHAM.

so candid, surely is entitled to the strictest candour. You shall send me your papers whenever you please. If I can succeed to your satisfaction, I shall be content; though I assure you there was no affectation in my saying that I find my small talent decline. I shall write the Life to oblige you, without any thoughts of publication, unless I am better pleased than I expect to be, and even then not in my own life. I had rather show that I am sensible of my own defects, and that I have judgment enough not to hope praise for my writings; for surely when they are not obnoxious, and one only leaves them behind one, it is a mark that one is not very vain of them.

I have found the whole set of my Painters, and will send them the first time I go to town; and I will have my papers on Chatterton transcribed for you, though I am much chagrined at your giving me no hope of seeing you again here. I will not say more of it; for, while it is in my power, I will certainly make you a visit now and then, if there is no other way of our meeting. Mr. Tyrwhitt, I hear, has actually published an Appendix, in which he gives up Mr. Rowley. I have not seen it, but will. Shall I beg you to transcribe the passage in which Dr. Kippis abuses my father and me? for I shall not buy the new edition, only to purchase abuse on me and mine: I may be angry with liberties he takes with Sir Robert, but not with myself; I shall rather take it as a flattery to be ranked with him; though there can be nothing worse said of my father than to place us together. Oh! that great, that good man! Dr. Kippis may as well throw a stone at the sun.

I am sorry you have lost poor Mr. Bentham. Will you say a civil thing for me to his widow, if she is living, and you think it not improper? I have not forgotten their great kindness to me. Pray send me your papers on Mr. Prior's generosity to Mr. Baker.[1] I am sorry it was not so. Prior is much a favourite with me, *though a Tory*, nor did I ever hear anything ill of him. He left his party, but not his friends, and seems to me to have been very amiable. Do you know I pretend to be very impartial sometimes? Mr. Hollis[2] wrote against me for not being Whig enough. I am offended with Mrs. Macaulay for being too much a Whig. In short, we are all

[1] The 'Biographia Britannica' had asserted, that Prior ceded to Mr. Baker the profits of his fellowship after his expulsion.—WRIGHT.

[2] Thomas Hollis, Esq., the editor of Toland's Life of Milton; Algernon Sidney's Discourses on Government; Algernon Sidney's Works, &c. He died in 1774.—WRIGHT.

silly animals, and scarce ever more so than when we affect sense. Yours ever.

1734. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1778.

If you wonder you have not heard from me *voici pourquoi:* I might plead business, but though I have enough, that was not the impediment. The true reason why I have not written was, because I have. I wrote to you above a week agone, intending Mr. Montagu should be the bearer, and gave it to Mr. Stonhewer, but, lo! his friend was set out, and the former returned my epistle to me. As the news it contained would be still-born, instead of being so lazy as to send it, I begin anew.

You now know all the history of your warlike metropolitan Archbishop Turpin [Markham]. I hope he made his entrance into his capital by beat of drum. If he attains what he deserves, and perhaps ambitions, a red hat, I shall beg to present him with that of his predecessor, Wolsey, out of my own museum; but I hope he will never be able to say with that son of a butcher, and with equal foundation from his pulpit, *Ego et Rex meus.* My brother [Sir Edward Walpole], who is no American, is exceedingly scandalised at this champion of high Church. This vulture has been so plumed in both his flights, that I fancy his successor will learn to mix the prudence of the serpent with the timidity of the dove, and creep on his belly instead of soaring.

Your adversary Murray is a blackguard.[1] You may bear to have filth thrown at you, when it is at the Duchess of Devonshire and at the youngest and handsomest women in town. It is a polished, sweet-tempered age.

What care you about all the new promotions? or what cares anybody but the promoted and the disappointed? One of the latter, Lord Howe, is the only one worth naming. He expected to be Treasurer of the Navy, because the appointments of Commanders-in-Chief and Ambassadors are not sufficient to content that family. Their sister [Caroline, Mrs. Howe] declares the quarrel is irreconcileable—it is a disinterested age.

I send you six *Gazettes Littéraires:* you needed not to celebrate

[1] Walpole refers to a printed letter (boldly and smartly written) from John Murray, bookseller, to W. Mason, A.M., Precentor, of York, "Concerning Mason's edition of Mr. Gray's Poems, and the Practices of Booksellers." 1777. 12mo.—Cunningham.

the conveyance. Mr. S[tonhewer] and I do not reckon you the pink of discretion.

I have almost finished the first volume of Dr. Robertson.[1] The materials are well put together, and it is a book that must please anybody to whom the matter is new. In short, it is not all so, and though the arrangement is good, I see no genius, nor shrewdness, none of that penetration that shone in the 'History of Scotland,' and totally left him in his 'Charles V.' Two expressions have shocked me. Speaking of that indefatigable good man Las Casas, who laboured to rescue the poor Americans from the tyranny of their conquerors, the Doctor calls it a *bustling* activity, and says he was ashamed to show his face after the fatal termination of his *splendid* schemes. What epithets for so humane a design! Could Archbishop Markham, in a sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel by fire and sword, paint charity in more contemptuous terms? It is a Christian age.

I retract saying I have found nothing new: I did not know that great part of the Spanish clergy adopted the compassion of Las Casas. I did not know that Las Casas—and there he was culpably bustling indeed!—suggested the idea of supplying the Spanish settlements with African slaves. This was guilt with a witness; for any lucrative mischief has fifty times more chance of being adopted, than a humane plan that combats interest. What contradictions we are! Las Casas had reason not to show face, not because the one scheme failed, but because the other succeeded. Is not he a fine historian who insinuates that a virtuous man ought to blush if the perversity of the age defeats his efforts to correct it? The doctrine no doubt will be applauded by all who have rendered *Patriots* an opprobrious term for those who laboured to prevent the effusion of English and American blood. It is a tender-hearted age.

My nephew continues sullen and calm. This saves me alarms, though not business and fatigue; yet I can get repose here, and now and then a moment to amuse myself. My Beauclerk Tower is almost finished. Adieu!

[1] Robertson's History of America.—CUNNINGHAM.

1735. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1778.

As I have just received yours of May 30th, I will begin to answer it, though I wrote to you on the first of this month, and think I shall not have enough additional to fill a whole letter yet.

The public imagined there would have been some changes on the rising of the Parliament; but they began and ended in the Law, and with bestowing the three vacant Garters. The Toulon squadron is certainly gone to America; if to Boston, it is possible with the immediate view only of getting sailors and two ships that are building there for France. If they can resist the temptation of burning Halifax, attacking Lord Howe, or the West Indies, they are as great philosophers as Sir William Howe, who has twice gazed at General Washington. The last account from that quarter had a little spirit in it; they have burnt above forty American sloops and fry in the Delaware. For these last days there have been rumours of disposition in the Americans to treat; but they do not gain much credit. Admiral Byron is sailed to America, and Admiral Keppel is at sea. At home we are spread with camps. This is all that amounts to facts, or to the eggs of facts. Sir William Howe is expected in a week or ten days. As the Parliament is not sitting, that topic may be suspended. Next we are to await the news of the reception of the Commissioners; perhaps, their return. It would be easy to dilate reflections on all this suspense; but I do not write to display my sagacity, but to inform you.

The meteor of the reading world is dead, Voltaire.[1] That throne is quite vacant. We shall see whether his old friend of Prussia[2] maintains that of war, or cedes it to a young Cæsar.[3] He seems to me to be aiming at a more artful crown—that of policy; and, in all probability, will attain it; at least, I am not much prejudiced yet in favour of his competitor. It is from beyond the Atlantic that the world, perhaps, will see a genius revive. They seem to set out with a politeness with which few empires have commenced. We have not shown ourselves quite so civilised. We hectored and called names, talked fire and sword, but have made more use of the first than of

[1] Voltaire died at Paris, 30th May, 1778.—Cunningham.
[2] Frederick III.—Walpole.
[3] The Emperor Joseph II.—Walpole.

the second. Our Generals beg to be tried, and our Ministers not to be tried. This does not sound well when translated into other languages. For my part, who hold that Chance has much more to do in the affairs of the world than Wisdom, I wait to see what the first will ordain. This belief is a sovereign preservative against despondency. There have been very gloomy moments in my life; but experience has shown me, either that events do not correspond to appearances, or that I have very little shrewdness; and therefore I can resign the honour of my penetration with satisfaction, when my foresight augurs ill. If Lord Chatham knew that he should conquer the world, or Dr. Franklin that he should reduce us lower than Lord Chatham found us, I should respect their penetration indeed! But, without detracting from their spirit or abilities, I do not believe the first expected half the success he met with, or the latter half the incapacity that has been exerted against, and, consequently, for him.

1736. TO THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY.

Strawberry Hill, June 25, 1778.

I AM quite astonished, Madam, at not hearing of Mr. Conway's being returned! What is he doing? Is he revolting and setting up for himself, like our nabobs in India? or is he forming Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark, into the united provinces in the compass of a silver penny? I should not wonder if this was to be the fate of our distracted empire, which we seem to have made so large, only that it might afford to split into separate kingdoms. I told Mr. C. I should not write any more, concluding he would not stay a twinkling; and your Ladyship's last encouraged my expecting him. In truth, I had nothing to tell him if he had written.

I have been in town but one single night this age, as I could not bear to throw away this phœnix June. It has rained a good deal this morning, but only made it more delightful. The flowers are all Arabian. I have found but one inconvenience, which is the hosts of cuckoos: one would not think one was in Doctors' Commons. It is very disagreeable, that the nightingales should sing but half a dozen songs, and the other beasts squall for two months together.

Poor Mrs. Clive has been robbed again in her own lane, as she was last year, and has got the jaundice, she thinks, with the fright.

I don't make a visit without a blunderbuss; so one might as well be invaded by the French. Though I live in the centre of Ministers, I do not know a syllable of politics; and though within hearing of Lady Greenwich, who is but two miles off, I have not a word of news to send your Ladyship. I live like Berecynthia, surrounded by nephews and nieces; yet Park-place is full as much in my mind, and I beg for its history. I am, Madam, &c.

1737. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 26, 1778.

Mr. Nicholls has been here, and tells me he has seen you, and that you have not been well, for which I am very sorry indeed. He says York disagreed with you, and that you will go thither no more in winter. The rest of his account was much more welcome: that you have made charming progress in your third book [of the 'English Garden'], and inserted divine lines on Gray. Them I do thirst to see, and trust I shall ere many moons have put on their nightcaps; for Lord Harcourt has asked me to meet you at Nuneham. When it is to be I don't know, for they are going or gone into Sussex; but if you can cast a figure and guess, I beg you to give me a hint, though nothing shall prevent my being faithful to that assignation, but my lord and master, gout, whose commands, however, I do not expect.

Well, the signal is fired. Admiral Keppel has had a smart skirmish with three frigates of the Brest squadron, and has sent one of them in. They fired first, and yet seem to have provoked him that they may plead we began the war. I trouble myself mighty little about what their majesties, the Kings of Europe, will say on these punctilios over their coffee. We, the Achivi, are to be the sufferers, and particularly we the Achivi of these islands. In truth Agamemnon himself will be no great gainer, nor be gathered to the Atridæ with quite so many crowns on his head as they bequeathed to him, and he will wish he had not worn that of Caledonia!

I know nothing else; but what a volume in that *else!* you bards that can prophesy with the lyre in your hand have

ample scope and verge enough

for pouring out odes full of calamity and of *funera Dardanæ genti.*

Distress is already felt; one hears of nothing but of the want of money; one sees it every hour. I sit in my Blue window and miss nine in ten of the carriages that used to pass before it. Houses sell for nothing, which, two years ago, nabobs would have given lacks of diamonds for. Sir Gerard Vannecks's house and beautiful terrace on the Thames, with forty acres of ground, and valued by his father at twenty thousand pounds, was bought in last week at six thousand. Richmond is deserted; an hundred and twenty coaches used to be counted at the church-door—there are now twenty. I know nobody that grows rich but Margaret. This Halcyon season has brought her more customers than ever, and were anything to happen to her, I have thoughts, like greater folk, of being my own minister, and showing my house myself. I don't wonder *your Garden* has grown in such a summer, and I am glad it has, that our taste in gardening may be immortal in verse, for I doubt it has seen its best days! Your poem may transplant it to America, whither our best works will be carried now, as our worst used to be. Do not you feel satisfied in knowing you shall be a classic in a free and rising empire? Swell all your ideas, give a loose to all your poetry; your lines will be repeated on the banks of the Oroonoko; and which is another comfort, Ossian's 'Dirges' will never be known there. Poor Strawberry must sink *in fœce Romuli;* that melancholy thought silences me. Good night![1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Wentworth Castle, July 1, 1778.

I HAVE had no occurrence in my progress or pilgrimage through this valley of life (to speak in the style of John Bunyan) worth mentioning since I wrote last, except peradventure the attending at Hornby Castle, and saying "dust to dust" over Lord Holdernesse's remains, might be thought worth the notifying to you; but when I consider that you did not seem to interest yourself much in the funeral of Lord Chatham, I suspect my poor Earl's would not be thought of much consequence by you. Indeed nobody of any rank ever seems to have stolen out of life in a more *incog.* manner than he has done; for, all Frenchman as he was, Voltaire would hinder his being talked about, even on his darling continent. So that, what with Lord Chatham's death here, and Voltaire's death there, his memory seems to have slipt between two stools; and so rest his soul, if Dr. Priestly chooses to let him have one, whether material or not is not in his case much material: excuse the pun for the sake of the sense, if you be candid enough so to do.

My expedition to Nuneham is put off *sine die.* It is not the fashion to begin one's summer till autumn, and Lord Harcourt you know always chooses to be in the fashion. Next year I trust our summers will be in the winter; for as our days are in the night, and consequently our noons at midnight, our seasons are but half the thing during the present ton, and I like consistency in all matters. I hope, however, to pass some of my dog-days about the beginning of next December at Strawberry, and have made up a light fustian frock for the purpose. My present noble host [Lord Strafford] you know is the very reverse of all this: his seasons go by clockwork, and

1738. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

July 4, 1778.

Children break their playthings to see the inside of them. Pope thought superior beings looked on Newton but as a monkey of uncommon parts: would not he think that we have been like babies smashing an empire to see what it was made of? Truly I doubt whether there will be a whole piece left in three months: the conduct bears due proportion to the incapacity—you ought to be on the spot to believe it. When Keppel's messenger Mr. Berkeley arrived, neither the First Lord of the Admiralty nor the Secretary was to be found! and now Mr. Keppel is returned, we learn that the East and West India fleets, worth four millions, are at stake, and the French frigates are abroad in pursuit of them. Yesterday the merchants were with Lord North to press Keppel might sail again against a superior fleet! Forty thousand men are on the coast, and transports assembling in every port, and nothing but incapacity and inability in all this, and not a grain of treachery.

General Howe is arrived and was graciously received. The agreeable news he brought is, that Clinton for want of provisions has abandoned Philadephia and marched through the Jerseys to New York without molestation, on condition of not destroying Philadelphia. The Congress has ratified the treaty with France, and intend to treat the Commissioners *de haut en bas*, unless you choose to

that clockwork as old as Tompion's. I came here last Monday, and shall return to my flock on Saturday. His Lordship and her Ladyship are much yours, and bid me say so. The latter I think a most excellent woman, and somewhat different from the De la Coque you mention; but I think I can account for this difference in a manner not very flattering to the sex.

'Sappho' is almost finished, and satisfies me better than my own things usually do; but I fear I grow like old fathers, who like their children whom they get after fifty much better than those they got at five-and-twenty, because they are proofs of their vigour. To be sure in the eye of episcopacy, I might full as venially have begat a child upon the body of my chambermaid as this upon my brain. A parson writing an amorous Opera is a phenomenon more horrid I trust in that eye than the growth of popery. But *macte virtute;* the deed is done, and I am ready to abide by the consequences.

Pray send me all the anecdotes you have concerning the latter end of Voltaire, and tell me whether opium or old age killed him, for I do not depend on newspapers when I am able to get Mad. du Deffand's intelligence at such a second hand as yours. I rest in hopes that we shall meet at Nuneham the beginning of September, for I fancy by that time his Lordship will be there to pluck his first violets. I am, as always,

Yours most truly,

W. Mason.

believe the 'Morning Post,' who says five provinces declare for peace. I told you lately my curiosity to know what is to be left to us at a general peace. The wisest thing the Ministers could do would be to ask that question incontinently. I am persuaded in the present apathy that the nation would be perfectly pleased, let the terms be what they would. A series of disasters may spoil this good humour, and there often wants but a man to fling a stone to spread a conflagration. The Treasury is not rich enough at present to indemnify the losers of four millions: the stockholders are two hundred and forty thousand, and the fraction forty thousand would make an ugly mob. In short, tempests that used to be composed of irascible elements never had more provocation than they are likely to have; such is the glimpse of our present horizon. Now to your letter.

If your Mecænas's fame [Lord Holdernesse's] is overwhelmed in Lord Chatham's and Voltaire's, it is already revenged on the latter's. Madame du Deffand's letter of to-day says, he is already forgotten. *La belle poule* has obliterated him, but probably will have a contrary effect on Lord Chatham. All my old friend has told me of Voltaire's death is, that the excessive fatigues he underwent by his journey to Paris, and by the bustle he made with reading his play to the actors and hearing them repeat it, and by going to it, and by the crowds that flocked to him; in one word, the agitation of so much applause at eighty-four threw him into a strangury, for which he took so much laudanum that his frame could not resist all, and he fell a martyr to his vanity. Nay, Garrick, who is above twenty years younger, and as full as vain, would have been choked with such doses of flattery; though he would like to die the death.

You, who are not apt to gape for incense, may be believed when you speak well of 'Sappho.' I am sorry I must wait for the sight till Lord Harcourt proclaims summer. I enjoy the present, which I remember none like; but even this is clouded by the vexation of seeing this lovely island spoiled and sold to shame! I look at our beautiful improvements, and sigh to think that they have seen their best days. Did you feel none of these melancholy reflections at Wentworth Castle? I wrote the Earl [Strafford] a letter two days ago that will not please him, but can one always contain one's chagrin when one's country is ruined by infatuation? No, we never can revive! We killed the hen that laid the golden eggs! The term *Great Britain* will be a jest. My English pride is wounded, yet there is one comfortable thought remains: when Liberty was abandoned by her sons here, she animated her genuine children, and inspired them to

chastise the traitor Scots that attacked her. *They* have made a blessed harvest of their machinations. If there is a drachm of sense under a crown, a Scot hereafter will be reckoned pestilential. Methinks the word Prerogative should never sound very delightful in this island; attempt to extend it and its fairest branches wither and drop off. What has an army of fifty thousand men fighting for sovereignty achieved in America? retreated from Boston, retreated from Philadelphia, laid down their arms at Saratoga, and lost thirteen provinces! Nor is the measure yet full! Such are the consequences of our adopting new legislators, new historians, new doctors! Locke and Sidney, for Humes, Johnsons, and Dalrymples! When the account is made up and a future Historiographer Royal casts up debtor and creditor, I hope he will please to state the balance between the last war *for America* and the present *against it*. The advantages of that we know,—Quebec, the Havannah, Martinico, Guadaloupe, the East Indies, the French and Spanish fleets destroyed, &c. &c.; all the bills *per contra* are not yet come in! Our writers have been disputing for these hundred and sixty-six years on Whig and Tory principles. Their successors, who I suppose will continue the controversy, will please to allow at least that if the Ministers of both parties were equally complaisant when in power, the splendour of the Crown (I say nothing of the happiness of the people, which is never taken into the account) has constantly been augmented by Whig administrations, and has faded (and then and now a little more) when Tories have governed! The reason is as plain: Whig principles are founded on sense; a Whig may be a fool, a Tory must be so: the consequence is plain; a Whig when a Minister may abandon his principles, but he will retain his sense and will therefore not risk the felicity of his posterity by sacrificing everything to selfish views. A Tory attaining power hurries to establish despotism: the honour, the trade, the wealth, the peace of the nation, all are little to him in comparison of the despotic will of his master, but are not you glad I write on small paper?

1739. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1778.

You tell me in yours of the 23rd of last month, which I received to-day, that my letters are necessary to your tranquillity. That is sufficient to make me write, though I have nothing very positive to

tell you. I did not mention Admiral Keppel's skirmish with and capture of two frigates of the Brest squadron; not because I thought it trifling, but concluding it would produce immediate declaration of war; and, for the fact itself, I knew both our papers and the French would anticipate me. Indeed, Sir John Dick has talked to me so much of his frequency and punctuality with you, that I might have concluded he would not neglect so public an event; not that I trust to anybody else for sending you intelligence.

No Declaration has followed on either side. I, who know nothing but what everybody knows, am disposed to hope that both nations are grown rational; that is, humane enough to dislike carnage. Both Kings are pacific by nature, and the voice of Europe now prefers legislators to *heroes*, which is but a name for destroyers of their species.

It is true, we are threatened with invasion. You ask me why I seem to apprehend less than formerly? For many reasons. In the first place, I am above thirty years older. Can one fear anything in the dregs of life as at the beginning? Experience, too, has taught me that nothing happens in proportion to our conceptions. I have learnt, too, exceedingly to undervalue human policy. Chance and folly counteract most of its wisdom. From the 'Mémoires de Noailles' I have learnt, that, between the years 1740 and 1750, when I,—ay, and my Lord Chesterfield too,—had such gloomy thoughts, France was trembling with dread of us. These are general reasons. My particular ones are, that, if France meditated a considerable blow, she has neglected her opportunity. Last year, we had neither army nor a manned fleet at home. Now, we have a larger and better army than ever we had in the island, and a strong fleet. Within these three days, our West India and Mediterranean fleets, for which we have been in great pain, are arrived, and bring not only above two millions, but such a host of sailors as will supply the deficiencies in our unequipped men-of-war. The country is covered with camps; General Conway, who has been to one of them, speaks with astonishment of the fineness of the men, of the regiments, of their discipline and manœuvring. In short, the French Court has taught all our young nobility to be soldiers. The Duke of Grafton, who was the most indolent of ministers, is the most indefatigable of officers. For my part, I am almost afraid that there will be a larger military spirit amongst our men of quality than is wholesome for our constitution: France will have done us hurt enough, if she has turned us into generals instead of senators.

I can conceive another reason why France should not choose to venture an invasion. It is certain that at least five American provinces wish for peace with us. Nor can I think that thirteen English provinces would be pleased at seeing England invaded. Any considerable blow received by us, would turn their new allies into haughty protectors. Should we accept a bad peace, America would find her treaty with them a very bad one: in short, I have treated you with speculations instead of facts. I know but one of the latter sort. The King's army has evacuated Philadelphia, from having eaten up the country, and has returned to New York. Thus it is more compact, and has less to defend.

General Howe is returned, richer in money than laurels. I do not know, indeed, that his wealth is great.

Fanaticism in a nation is no novelty: but you must know, that, though the effects were so solid, the late appearance of enthusiasm about Lord Chatham was nothing but a general affectation of enthusiasm. It was a contention of hypocrisy between the Opposition and the Court, which did not last even to his burial. Not three of the Court attended it, and not a dozen of the Minority of any note. He himself said, between his fall in the House of Lords and his death, that, when he came to himself, not one of his old acquaintance of the Court but Lord Despencer so much as asked him how he did. Do you imagine people are struck with the death of a man, who were not struck with the sudden appearance of his death? We do not counterfeit so easily on a surprise, as coolly; and, when we are cool on surprise, we do not grow agitated on reflection.

The last account I heard from Germany was hostile. Four days ago both the Imperial and Prussian Ministers expected news of a battle. O, ye fathers of your people, do you thus dispose of your children? How many thousand lives does a King save, who signs a peace! It was said in jest of our Charles II., that he was the real *father* of his people, so many of them did he beget himself. But tell me, ye divines, which is the most virtuous man, he who begets twenty bastards, or he who sacrifices an hundred thousand lives? What a contradiction is human nature! The Romans rewarded the man who got three children, and laid waste the world. When will the world know that peace and propagation are the two most delightful things in it? As his Majesty of France has found out the latter, I hope he will not forget the former.

1740. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, July 8, 1778.

I HAVE had some conversation with a ministerial person, on the subject of pacification with France; and he dropped a hint, that as we should not have much chance of a good peace, the Opposition would make great clamour on it. I said a few words on the duty of Ministers to do what they thought right, be the consequence what it would. But as honest men do not want such lectures, and dishonest will not let them weigh, I waived that theme, to dwell on what is more likely to be persuasive, and which I am firmly persuaded is no less true than the former maxim; and that was, that the Ministers are *still* so strong, that if they could get a peace that would save the nation, though not a brilliant or glorious one, the nation in general would be pleased with it, and the clamours of the Opposition be insignificant.

I added, what I think true, too, that no time is to be lost in treating; not only for preventing a blow, but from the consequences the first misfortune would have. The nation is not yet alienated from the Court, but it is growing so; is grown so enough, for any calamity to have violent effects. Any internal disturbance would advance the hostile designs of France. An insurrection from distress would be a double invitation to invasion; and, I am sure, much more to be dreaded, even personally, by the Ministers, than the ill-humours of Opposition for even an inglorious peace. To do the Opposition justice, it is not composed of incendiaries. Parliamentary speeches raise no tumults: but tumults would be a dreadful thorough bass to speeches. The Ministers do not know the strength they have left (supposing they apply it in time), if they are afraid of making any peace. They were too sanguine in making war; I hope they will not be too timid of making peace.

What do you think of an idea of mine of offering France a neutrality? that is, to allow her to assist both us and the Americans. I know she would assist only them: but were it not better to connive at her assisting them, without attacking us, than her doing both? A treaty with her would perhaps be followed by one with America. We are sacrificing all the essentials we *can* recover, for a few words; and risking the independence of this country, for the nominal supremacy over America. France seems to leave us

time for treating. She made no scruple of begging peace of us in '63, that she might lie by and recover her advantages. Was not that a wise precedent? Does not she *now* show that it was? Is not policy the honour of nations? I mean, not morally, but has Europe left itself any other honour? And since it has really left itself no honour, and as little morality, does not the morality of a nation consist in its preserving itself in as much happiness as it can? The invasion of Portugal by Spain in the last war, and the partition of Poland, have abrogated the law of nations. Kings have left no ties between one another. Their duty to their people is still allowed. He is a good King that preserves his people; and if temporising answers that end, is it not justifiable? You, who are as moral as wise, answer my questions. Grotius is obsolete. Dr. Joseph[1] and Dr. Frederic,[2] with four hundred thousand commentators, are reading new lectures—and I should say, thank God, to one another, if the four hundred thousand commentators were not in worse danger than they.[3] Louis XVI. is grown a casuist compared to those partitioners. Well, let us simple individuals keep our honesty, and bless our stars that we have not armies at our command, lest we should divide kingdoms that are at our *bienséance!* What a dreadful thing it is for such a wicked little imp as man to have absolute power!—But I have travelled into Germany, when I meant to talk to you only of England; and it is too late to recall my text. Good night!

1741. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

July 12, 1778.

Mr. Lort has delivered your papers to me, dear Sir, and I have already gone through them. I will try if I can make anything of them, but fear I have not art enough, as I perceive there is absolutely but one fact—the expulsion. You have certainly very clearly proved that Mr. Baker was neither supported by Mr. Prior nor Bishop Burnet; but these are mere negatives. So is the question whether he intended to compile an 'Athenæ Cantabri-

[1] The Emperor of Germany.—Walpole.

[2] Frederic II., King of Prussia.—Walpole.

[3] The Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia having some dispute about Bavaria, brought immense armies into the field, but found their forces so nearly balanced, that neither ventured to attack the other; and the Prussian monarch falling back upon Silesia, the affair was, through the intervention of the Empress of Russia, settled by negotiation, which ended in the peace of Teschen.—Wright.

gienses' or not; and on that you say but little, as you have not seen his papers in the Museum. I will examine the printed catalogue, and try if I can discover the truth thence, when I go to town. I will also borrow the new 'Biographia' [Kippis], as I wish to know more of the expulsion. As it is our only fact, one would not be too dry on it. Upon the whole, I think that it would be preferable to draw up an ample character of Mr. Baker, rather than a Life. The one was most beautiful, amiable, conscientious; the other totally barren of more than one event: and though you have taken excellent pains to discover all that was possible, yet there is an obscurity hangs over the circumstances that even did attend him; as his connection with Bishop Crewe and his living. His own modesty comes out the brighter, but then it composes a character, not a life.

As to Mr. Kippis and his censures, I am perfectly indifferent to them. He betrays a pert malignity in hinting an intention of being severe on my father, for the pleasure of exerting a right I allowed, and do allow to be a just one, though it is not just to do it for that reason; however, let him say his pleasure, the truth will not hurt my father; falsehood will recoil on the author.

His asserting, that my censure of Mr. Addison's character of Lord Somers is not to be justified, is a silly *ipse dixit*, as he does not, in truth cannot, show why it is not to be justified. The passage I alluded to is the argument of an old woman; and Mr. Addison's being a writer of true humour is not a justification of his reasoning like a superstitious gossip. In the other passage you have sent me, Mr. Kippis is perfectly in the right, and corrects me very justly. Had I ever seen Archbishop Abbot's Preface, with the outrageous flattery on, and lies of James I., I should certainly never have said, "Honest Abbot could not flatter." I should have said, and do say, I never saw grosser perversion of truth. One can almost excuse the faults of James when his bishops were such base sycophants. What can a king think of human nature, when it produces such wretches? I am too impartial to prefer Puritans to clergymen, or *vice versâ*, when Whitgift and Abbot only ran a race of servility and adulation: the result is, that "priests of all religions are the same."[1] James and his Levites were worthy of each other; the golden calf and the idolaters were well coupled, and it is pity they ever came out of the wilderness. I am very glad Mr. Tyson has escaped death and

[1] Dryden.—CUNNINGHAM.

disappointment: pray wish him joy of both from me. Has not this Indian summer dispersed your complaints? We are told we are to be invaded. Our Abbots and Whitgifts now see with what successes and consequences their preaching up a crusade against America has been crowned! Archbishop Markham may have an opportunity of exercising his martial prowess. I doubt he would resemble Bishop Crewe more than good Mr. Baker. Let us respect those only who are Israelites indeed. I surrender Dr. Abbot to you. Church and Presbytery are terms for monopolies. Exalted notions of Church matters are contradictions in terms to the lowliness and humility of the Gospel. There is nothing sublime but the Divinity. Nothing is sacred but as His work. A tree or a brute stone is more respectable as such, than a mortal called an Archbishop, or an edifice called a Church, which are the puny and perishable productions of men. Calvin and Wesley had just the same views as the Pope; power and wealth their objects. I abhor both, and admire Mr. Baker.

P.S. I like Popery as well as you, and have shown I do. I like it as I like chivalry and romance. They all furnish one with ideas and visions, which Presbyterianism does not. A Gothic church or a convent fills one with romantic dreams—but for the mysterious, the Church in the abstract, it is a jargon that means nothing, or a great deal too much, and I reject it and its apostles, from Athanasius to Bishop Keene.

1742. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 16, 1778.

Though it is a most anxious moment, I do not write to tell you or talk of politics: most men in these regions expect news of a battle at sea; I do not. As we have nothing left to save but ourselves, *I wish theirselves* would leave themselves and us that little.

Jean Jacques is certainly dead[1] as well as Voltaire. Poor Charon! "Fanny, blooming fair,"[2] died here yesterday of a stroke of palsy. She had lost her memory for some years, and remembered nothing but her beauty and not her methodism. Being confined with only

[1] Rousseau died 3rd July, 1778.—Cunningham.
[2] Lady Fanny Shirley. See Walpole's note at p. 107.—Cunningham.

servants, she was continually lamenting, "I to be abandoned that all the world used to adore!" She was seventy-two.

I received a letter this morning from the engraver of Johnson's 'Poets' to enquire if I knew of any portrait of Dyer or Mallet. If the latter is one of Johnson's *Poets*, I do not wonder Gray was not.

The sun seems to be the only prince that is generous, and sticks by us in our distress. People of all ages call it an old-fashioned summer, such as we used to have ten or twenty years ago, when you are to suppose they were young. I that do not haggle about my threescores, do not remember any such summer these fifty years. It is Italy in a green gown.

Mr. Nicholls and I went last week to see the new apartment at Osterley Park. The first chamber, a drawing-room, not a large one, is the most superb and beautiful that can be conceived, and hung with gobelin tapestry, and enriched by Adam in his best taste, except that he has stuck diminutive heads in bronze, no bigger than a half-crown, into the chimney-piece's hair. The next is a light plain green velvet bed-chamber. The bed is of green satin richly embroidered with colours, and with eight columns; too theatric, and too like a modern head-dress, for round the outside of the dome are festoons of artificial flowers. What would Vitruvius think of a dome decorated by a milliner? The last chamber after these two proud rooms, chills you: it is called the Etruscan, and is painted all over like Wedgwood's ware, with black and yellow small grotesques. Even the chairs are of painted wood. It would be a pretty waiting-room in a garden. I never saw such a profound tumble into the Bathos. It is going out of a palace into a potter's field. Tapestry, carpets, glass, velvet, satin, are all attributes of winter. There could be no excuse for such a cold termination, but its containing a cold bath next to the bed-chamber:—and it is called taste to join these incongruities! I hope I have put you into a passion.

1743. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 18, 1778.

As I was going out this evening, I was stopped in Twickenham, and told that France has declared war. I knew the Brest squadron was at sea, and that Admiral Keppel by letters received from him at the Admiralty on Thursday, is off the Land's End, in hourly

expectation of being joined by three or four men-of-war, which will make his fleet thirty ships of the line, with which he was determined to seek the enemy, who have thirty-one, two of fifty guns, and eight frigates. Thus the battle may be fought as soon as war is proclaimed; and thus our Ministers may have a full prospect of all their consummately wise measures may produce! What can be expected from two wars when one has been so ignominious?—With an army of fifty thousand men against a rabble, and without being beaten, they have lost a whole continent, and near half that army, and retreated from place to place! Not one General has gained any reputation; our only fleet on this side of the world is to decide whether the two islands are not to be fought for on land. Thus have we, the people, been gamed for; and some few of us against our wills. It is very hard, especially on us that remember other days. I know not what Lord Mansfield's reflections are, when he recollects his sagacious journey to Paris to convince the French cabinet that it was against their interest to protect the Americans, and his famous passage of the Rubicon. I should be sorry to feel what he ought to feel even on the score of folly,—indeed defend it Numerus; and all that may be left to us few, may be to meet him, *torva tuentes* like the ghost of Dido.

England will one day recollect it had a Minister [Sir Robert Walpole], to whom it owed twenty years of prosperity and happiness, and who left it a motto that would have preserved such halcyon days. *Quieta non movere* was as wise a saying as any my Lord Bolingbroke bequeathed to my Lord Bute. I do not know whether it is true, what has been said, that my father on being advised to tax America, replied, "It must be a bolder Minister than I am." But that motto of his spoke his opinion.

Well; War proclaimed! and I am near sixty-one. Shall I live to see peace again? and what a peace! I endeavour to compose my mind, and call in every collateral aid. I condemn my countrymen, but cannot, would not divest myself of my love to my country. I enjoy the disappointment of the Scots, who had prepared the yoke for the Americans and for our necks too. I cannot blame the French whom we have tempted to ruin us: yet, to be ruined by France!—there the Englishman in me feels again. My chief comfort is in talking to you, though you do not answer me. I write to vent my thoughts, as it is easier than brooding over them, but allow that it is difficult to be very tranquil when the navy of England is at stake That thought annihilates resentment. I wish for nothing but victory

and then peace, yet what lives must victory cost! Nor will one victory purchase it. The nation is so frantic that success would intoxicate us more; yet calamity, that alone could sober us, is too near our doors. Resignation to the will of Heaven is the language of reason as well as of religion, when one knows not what would be best for us. It is a dilemma to which the honest are reduced: our gamesters are in a worse situation. The best they can hope for, is to sit down with the *débris* of an empire. What a line they have drawn between them and Lord Chatham! I believe it was modesty made them not attend his funeral. Will the House of Brunswick listen again to the flatterers of prerogative?

My time of life, that ought to give me philosophy, dispirits me. I cannot expect to live to see England revive. I shall leave it at best an insignificant island. Its genius is vanished like its glories; one sees nor hero nor statesman arise to flatter hope. Dr. Franklin, thanks to Mr. Wedderburn, is at Paris. Every way I turn my thoughts, the returns are irksome. What is the history of a fallen empire? A transient satire on the vices and follies that hurried it to dissolution. The protest of a few that foretold it, is not registered. The names of Jefferies and two or three principals satisfy the sage moralist who hurries to more agreeable times. I will go to bed and sleep, if I can. Pray write to me; tell me how you reconcile your mind to our situation—I cannot. Two years ago I meditated leaving England if it was enslaved. I have no such thought now. I will steal into its bosom when my hour comes, and love it to the last.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, July 19, 1778.

In one of your unanswered letters (I am ashamed to look at its date to say which, for I have three before me) you talk of my having finished my third book [of the 'English Garden'], and of my having been ill; neither of which are true, though I thank Heaven only for the falsehood of the last. The truth is, I showed Mr. Nicholls (when he was at York) an exordium, written I believe about five years ago, which I believe you have seen, and I turned a slight cold into a sickness to avoid doing the hospitable honours of my post in too great a degree; for, *entre nous*, that said Mr. N. (but I beg it may go no farther for the honour of the cloth) drinks like any fish, though perhaps you have not discovered it, and it is happy for him that Mr. Gray cannot. Now both this poetical communication, and this plea of sickness, were mere subterfuges, to avoid something worse, *i.e.*, hearing the eternalities of his foreign tour, and saving myself from a morning headache. Yet either your having mentioned my finishing the book, or this wonderful fine weather, or a new bower (already half covered with woodbine), which I made only two months ago, and in which I now write this letter—one, or all of these causes collectively, have actually made me resume the work, and I do verily believe that I shall get the whole of it into a readable condition by the time we meet at Nuneham, which I hope will be in September.

Pray ask Madame du Deffand whether Rousseau really died of eating strawberries?

1744. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Saturday, July 18, 1778.

YESTERDAY evening the following notices were fixed up in Lloyd's Coffee-house :—That a merchant in the City had received an express from France, that the Brest fleet, consisting of twenty-eight ships of the line, were sailed, with orders to burn, sink, and destroy. That Admiral Keppel was at Plymouth, and had sent to demand three more ships of the line to enable him to meet the French. On these notices Stocks sunk three-and-a-half per cent. An account I have received this morning from a good hand says, that on Thursday the Admiralty received a letter from Admiral Keppel, who was off the Land's End, saying that the 'Worcester' was in sight; that the 'Peggy' had joined him, and had seen the 'Thunderer' making sail for the fleet; that he was waiting for the 'Centaur,' 'Terrible,' and 'Vigilant;' and that having received advice from Lord Shuldham that the 'Shrewsbury' was to sail from Plymouth on Thursday, he should likewise wait for her. His fleet will then consist of thirty ships of the line; and he hoped to have an opportunity of trying his strength with the French fleet on our own coast: if not, he

and in the meantime do not commit any fruit debauches of the same kind. You are apt to sin in this way, or if you do, take St. Paul's advice, and "use a little wine for your stomach's sake," and your often gout infirmities. I do not wish you to do the honours to Nicholls in claret, that I did in port; yet, as far as half a pint may go, or a third of a bottle, especially after your raspberries, I hold to be salutary.

Nothing can be so provoking as this fine weather. It comes on purpose to convince one that one's country is the finest climate in the world, just when one should be learning to forget that it is one's country. Last year I would have suffered it to be a province of France with ten times the complacency. I console myself at present with thinking it is too good for those that govern it, and therefore the better it is the greater will be their loss; but what do I gain by that? Ay, there's the rub! a rub that takes the skin off one's very shin-bone.

Pray, do you think it possible to procure me one of the prints of Lady Di's drawing of the Duchess of Devonshire? I should think you might have interest enough with the designer to obtain it. I hear the plate is in the possession of the Duchess of Marlborough; if you succeed, pray bring it with you to Nuneham.

We are in the ton here I can assure you. An old maid in a neighbouring village, from which she hardly ever stirred, is broke for 6000*l.*: she had no visible way of spending it but in turning ivory.

I expect Giardini here some time next month, in order that he may comprehend the full meaning of the words he is to set. I am clear, if he will but be docile, which he promises to be, that he will do it more justice than any of our English composers.

I have taken again to my old size large paper, and the consequence is that I cannot fill it; "no matter," say you, "I have had full enough, and will suffer you to conclude yourself my most faithful servant,"

W. MASON.

would seek them on theirs. The French fleet sailed on the 7th, consisting of thirty-one ships of the line, two fifty-gun ships, and eight frigates. This state is probably more authentic than those at Lloyd's.

Thus you see how big the moment is! and, unless far more favourable to us in its burst than good sense allows one to promise, it must leave us greatly exposed. Can we expect to beat without considerable loss?—and then, where have we another fleet? I need not state the danger from a reverse. The Spanish Ambassador certainly arrived on Monday.

I shall go to town on Monday for a day or two; therefore, if you write to-morrow, direct to Arlington-street. I add no more: for words are unworthy of the situation; and to blame now, would be childish. It is hard to be gamed for against one's consent: but when one's country is at stake, one must throw oneself out of the question. When one is old and nobody, one must be whirled with the current, and shake one's wings like a fly, if one lights on a pebble. The prospect is so dark, that one shall rejoice at whatever does not happen that may. Thus I have composed a sort of philosophy for myself, that reserves every possible chance. You want none of these artificial aids to your resolution. Invincible courage and immaculate integrity are not dependent on the folly of Ministers or on the events of war. Adieu!

1745. TO CHARLES BEDFORD, ESQ.[1]

Arlington Street, Wednesday, July 22, 1778.

I WILL be obliged to you if you will look into the Abbey, and see if Mr. Gray's monument is uncovered yet; as, if it is, I will call and see it. Yours ever,

H. WALPOLE.

1746. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1778.

UPON reviewing your papers, dear Sir, I think I can make more of them than I at first conceived. I have even commenced the Life [of Baker], and do not dislike my ideas for it, if the execution does but answer. At present I am interrupted by another task, which you,

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

too, have wished me to undertake. In a word, somebody has published Chatterton's Works, and charged me heavily for having discountenanced him. He even calls for the indignation of the public against me. It is somewhat singular, that I am to be offered up as a victim at the altar of a notorious impostor! but, as many saints have been impostors, so many innocent persons have been sacrificed to them. However, I shall not be patient under this attack, but shall publish an answer—the Narrative I mentioned to you. I would, as you know, have avoided entering into this affair if I could; but as I do not despise public esteem, it is necessary to show how groundless the accusation is. Do not speak of my intention, as perhaps I shall not execute it immediately.

I am not in the least acquainted with the Mr. Bridges you mention, nor know that I ever saw him. The tomb for Mr. Gray is actually erected, and at the generous expense of Mr. Mason, and with an epitaph of four lines, as you heard, and written by him—but the scaffolds are not yet removed. I was in town yesterday, and intended to visit it, but there is digging a vault for the family of Northumberland, which obstructs the removal of the boards.

I rejoice in your amendment, and reckon it among my obligations to the fine weather, and hope it will be the most lasting of them.

1747. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1778.

Yours of the 19th I did not receive till yesterday. I do not write again so soon to answer it, but on a subject very foreign to all my last, and which I will tell you presently, when I have replied to a few of your articles.

I did not discover, and certainly did not suspect, a bacchanalian disposition in a certain person [Mr. Nicholls], for we dined together but once. We think alike on that subject, I assure you, but I will reserve it for our meeting.

Madame du Deffand said nothing on the strawberries and cream, nor if I asked her would she probably remember to answer. She never interested herself about Rousseau, nor admired him. Her understanding is too just not to be disgusted with his paradoxes and affectations; and his eloquence could not captivate her, for she hates eloquence. She liked no style but Voltaire's, and has an aversion to all modern philosophers. She has scarce mentioned Rousseau,

living or dead; and D'Alembert was egregiously mistaken in thinking she wrote my letter to him: Rousseau would have been still more offended had he known how very little she ever thought on him. She was born and had lived in the age of true taste, and allowed nobody but Voltaire to belong to it. She holds that all the rest have corrupted their taste and language. La Fontaine is her idol; that is, simplicity is.

But I shall not forget to answer you on the article of strawberries and cream. How very kind to caution me against them; and how kindly I take it! In truth I am very temperate now on that head, as well as on all others. I eat very little cream, remembering that my stomach is not so young as it was; but for wine, I am persuaded fruit never hurts me, unless wine is poured on it. Yet the other day I did drink two glasses. The excessive heat of the nights had exhausted me so much, that I had recourse to that cordial, and it quite restored me: it would not unless a novelty. I beg your pardon for talking on myself, but gratitude opened my heart. I feel your goodness with great satisfaction, for it could please me in no form more than yours; and I wished to prove to you that one you regard, is not childish.

I doubt much whether I can get you a print of the Duchess of Devonshire: certainly not before winter, for Lady Di is at Brighthelmstone; but I will try then: she had not many proofs for herself, and I know had not one left. Everybody, from taste or fashion, tore them away. The Duke [of Marlborough], her brother, paid for the plate, and would suffer, I think, but two hundred impressions to be taken. I promised the Duke of Gloucester to beg one for him, which perhaps will not be refused. If I can obtain two, the second is yours. I have set my own in a frame I trust you will like, as it harmonises with it amazingly, though rich.

I have been two days in town. What I could collect was, that the Congress will not deign to send any answer to the Commissioners; that Lord Howe refused to act as one of them, and that the bear and the monkey have quarrelled; that the Americans have sent an expedition to Florida, and that Washington's army is reduced to seven thousand and is very sickly. One should think the two last circumstances were invented to balance the others; but surely our Ministers ought at last to exaggerate on the other side, that things may seem to turn out better than was expected rather than worse, as hitherto they have contrived to make them appear.

France has *not* declared war; and if the Brest fleet did sail it was not a stone's throw. I imagine they wait for news of D'Estains, before they take the last step, or they will draw Keppel aside, and then set forth an embarkation. I sometimes hope peace is not impossible. It cannot be half so bad as a new war in our present situation: it would at least give us time to prepare for war. We are come to the necessity of fortifying the island, or it may be lost in a single battle. When we have no longer the superiority at sea, it would be madness—it would—it is madness to have no resource, no spot where to make a stand: but what signify my politics? who will listen to them?

It is not unlucky that I have got something to divert my mind; for I can think on other subjects when I have them. I am at last forced to enter into the history of the supposed Rowley's Poems. I must write on it, nay, what is more, print, not directly, controversially, but in my own defence. Some jackanapes at Bristol (I don't know who) has published Chatterton's Works; and I suppose to provoke me to tell the story, accuses me of treating that marvellous creature with contempt; which having supposed, contrary to truth, he invites his readers to feel indignation at me. It has more than once before been insinuated that his disappointment from me contributed to his horrid fate. You know how gently I treated him. He was a consummate villain, and had gone enormous lengths before he destroyed himself. It would be cruel indeed, if one was to be deemed the assassin of every rogue that miscarries in attempting to cheat one; in short the attack is now too direct not to be repelled. Two months ago I did draw up an account of my share in that affair. That Narrative and an Answer to this insult which I wrote last night I will publish, signed with my name, but not advertised by it. It will reach all those that take part in the controversy, and I do not desire it should go farther. These things I will have transcribed, and ask your leave to send you before they go to the press. I am in no hurry to publish, nor is the moment a decent one; yet I embrace it, as I shall be the less talked over. I hate controversy, yet to be silent now, would be interpreted guilt; and it is impossible to be more innocent than I was in that affair. Being innocent, I take care not to be angry. Mr. Tyrwhitt, one of the enthusiasts to Rowley, has recanted, and published against the authenticity of the Poems. The new publisher of Chatterton's undisputed works seems to question the rest too, so his attack on me must be mere impertinent curiosity. One satisfaction will arise from all this; the almost incre-

dible genius of Chatterton will be ascertained. He had generally genuine powers of poetry; often wit, and sometimes natural humour. I have seen reams of his writing, besides what is printed. He had a strong vein of satire, too, and very irascible resentment; yet the poor soul perished[1] before he was nineteen![2] He had read, and written, as if he was fourscore, yet it cannot be discovered when or where. He had no more principles than if he had been one of all our late Administrations. He was an instance that a complete genius and a complete rogue can be formed before a man is of age. The world has generally the honour of their education, but it is not necessary; you see by Chatterton, that an individual could be as perfect as a senate! Adieu!

1748. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Aug. 4, 1778.

For these three weeks I have been constantly waiting for news from sea; for to tell you that nothing had happened, was telling you nothing. We are in the oddest situation that can be; at war, in fact, but managed like a controversy in divinity: we and France write against each other, and do each other all the hurt we can, but do not own we are enemies. The communication is open, the packet-boats pass as usual, and French and English are allowed to go to Paris and to come to London, as if to compare notes on all that happens. I am not sorry that this Christian plausibility is preserved; it may facilitate peace without the tediousness of a formal treaty. The two countries have nothing to do but to declare hostilities are at an end.

On Saturday last we thought we had gained a double festival for the first of August. Admiral Keppel's captain arrived, and a rumour spread that he had taken or destroyed seventeen of the Brest fleet. It was not for want of will or endeavours if he has not. He had placed himself between that squadron and port, and tried to force them to battle; which they obstinately declined, till he came so near that they fired on him. He desired no more, and the fight began smartly; but, the wind favouring the French, they

[1] So Wordsworth, of Chatterton:

"The sleepless soul that perish'd in his pride."—Cunningham.

[2] When only seventeen years, nine months, and a few days.—Cunningham.

kept sailing away, but pouring all their broadsides on his masts and rigging, which they damaged a good deal. This flying fight lasted two hours, and our Admiral promised himself a complete battle the next day: but, as the French meant mischief and not glory, at day-break they were vanished—in short, got into port; and Keppel is returned to Plymouth, heartily chagrined that his enemies are so little ashamed of running away.

There is as little prospect of laurels from Byron's squadron. Both his fleet and D'Estaing's have suffered by a great storm. Nor are we likely to have more olives than laurels. The Congress has treated our Commissioners with sovereign contempt; and the Commissioners themselves have quarrelled, and are coming home. Thus we have begged peace of those we bullied, and only been laughed at. We seem to have wearied Fortune in the last war.

Cæsar seems to have made as bad a figure as we. After usurping Bavaria, he is forced to beg peace too. They say he is convinced of having been in the wrong, by a renunciation that has been found of the Emperor Albert. It is the first time a hero at the head of two hundred and twenty thousand men was ever convinced by an old parchment! His Imperial reason did not deign to listen to law and equity in the dismemberment of Poland; nor would he now, I ween, if Lord Chief Justice Frederic had not enclosed him with more numerous armies. We did not pay much regard to the charters of America, till France helped the latter to carry on the suit.

I am very anxious for the confirmation of this pacification in Germany; for the Duke of Gloucester was just setting out to make the campaign under the King of Prussia. It was worthy of his spirit, and nobody dared to remonstrate against it; and yet the physicians think he could not support an autumnal campaign. The Duchess herself has only shed floods of tears, but not murmured. The behaviour of both does them infinite honour.

Your friends, the Mackenzies,[1] are arrived, and Mrs. Anne Pitt is expected daily. Mrs. Foote's friend, old Lady Westmorland,[2] is dead, and the ancient beauty, Lady Fanny Shirley;[3] she had lost

[1] James Stuart Mackenzie, only brother of Lord Bute, married Lady Elizabeth Campbell, third daughter of John, Duke of Argyll.—WALPOLE.

[2] Mary, daughter and heiress of Lord Henry Cavendish, second son of the first Duke of Devonshire. Lord Westmorland died 1768.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Formerly a great beauty, admired and celebrated by Lord Chesterfield, who wrote on her the well-known song, "When Fanny, blooming fair."—WALPOLE. On Lord Chesterfield's authorship of this song (which is very doubtful), see Isaac Reed's curious note in '*Lysons's Environs*,' vol. iii., p. 599.—CUNNINGHAM.

her head some time, and her senses before, for she has made Lady Huntingdon[1] her heir, having turned Methodist when she was no longer admired.

Our summer is as Italian as yours: I do not remember such an one. Adieu!

1749. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 10, 1778.

I DID not write to you on our naval skirmish, because I had nothing to add to what you saw in the papers. It is evident the French had orders to risk nothing, and accordingly they got out of the scrape as fast as they could, yet they pretend that our fleet retired first. If it had, we should have taken as much pains to charge Mr. Keppel as they could. The consequences are and probably will be good. Their flight will not encourage them, and it has saved our East India fleet, which is all come in. I have heard enough to make me change my mind about Spain, who I believe will join in the *mêlée*, unless we are awed into peace, which I cannot but suppose is the meaning of the war going on in this equivocal shape. I expect to hear some *beau matin* that every thing is compromised. There are reasons both good and bad why it ought not to surprise one.

I have lengthened my Chattertonian pamphlet, and now think shall not publish it. It will clear me whenever it does appear, and I have rather more respect for posterity than for the present generations, who have evidently lost all ideas of right and wrong; but I will say no more on two topics of so little worth as the present age and myself.

In lieu of every thing else, I here send you an original indeed,—the preface to 'Rousseau's Mémoires,' which is got out, though the work itself is I believe not yet published. The style, the singularity, the intolerable vanity, speak it genuine;—nay, so does the laboured eloquence, which would be sublime if it were not affected frenzy, and worse. I wish you not to give copies, because, should it be discovered, I should be said to have spread it to his prejudice; yet I have none, nor am angry with him by the common rule,

[1] Lady Selina Shirley, niece of Lady Fanny, and patroness of the Methodists.—WALPOLE.

because I offended him. So far from it, I have always allowed his masterly genius, and was only angry with him for his own sake, that he, who was born to be superior in common sense, should have stooped to build his fame on paradox, and seemed to choose rather to be talked of for the singularity of his writings, than for their excellence; but this preface goes farther, much farther.—He aims at being the capital figure at the last day. I send it to you, shocking as it is: *la voici.*—

Je forme une entreprise qui n'eût jamais d'examples, et dont l'execution n'aura point d'imitateurs. Je vais montrer à mes semblables un homme dans toute la vérité de la nature, et cet homme c'est moi.

Moi seul je sens mon cœur et connois les hommes; je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai vus; j'ose croire n'être fait comme aucun de ceux qui existent. Je ne vaux pas mieux ou moins, je suis autre. Si la nature a bien ou mal fait de briser le moule dans lequel elle m'a jetté, c'est ce dont on ne peut juger qu'après m'avoir lû. Que la trompette du Jugement dernier sonne quand elle voudra je viendrai, ce livre à la main, me presenter devant le souverain juge. Je dirai hautement, voilà ce que j'ai fait, ce que j'ai pensé, ce que je suis. J'ai dit le bien et le mal avec la même franchise; je n'ai rien tû, rien déguisé, rien pallié; je me suis montré coupable et vil quand je l'ai été; j'ai montré mon intérieur comme tu l'as vû toi-même, être éternel. Rassemble autour de moi l'innombrable foule de mes semblables; qu'ils écoutent mes confessions, qu'ils rougissent de mes indignités, qu'ils gémissent de mes misères; que chacun devoilé à son tour son cœur aux pieds de ton trône, et qu'un seul te dise ensuite, je suis meilleur que set homme là.

What can one see in this rhapsody of insufferable pride but a studied delirium, an arrogant humiliation, a confession turned into a bravado,—and for what theatre! and before whom! Cartouche might have proposed to talk in such a style at the Day of Judgment. Think of the audacious insect allotting to himself a mould made on purpose, intending to be the orator of that moment, and demanding to have all mankind judged by comparison with him! To meditate a gasconade for the end of the world!

Suppose, instead of her modest contrite deportment, Mary Magdalen had stalked into the hall of the Pharisee * * * I hope a friend of ours will be cured of his enthusiasm to this new Erostratus, who has burnt the temple of Modesty to make himself

talked of. Here I finish: it is impossible to add anything that would be of a piece with this rant.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Aug. 14, 1778.

I WILL say nothing about our naval skirmish, nor our land preparations, except that our poor country from being once a well-bred gentleman is now turned a down-right blackguard. A gentleman when he has received an affront, sends his challenge, and then fights his duel. A blackguard, in similar circumstances, drives his fist directly at the jowl of his adversary, and waives the ceremonial of the challenge. I leave you to make the application; only I protest that had Keppel been victorious, I should have hesitated about ringing the three cracked bells in my country steeple, for I can never think a fair victory can be gained over an enemy before war has been declared. Perhaps I am too punctilious: no matter, we have not been victorious, so we won't dispute about it. Your extract from Rousseau is indeed *sui generis*, and I thank you a thousand times for it. Poor man! I always pitied him, even when I admired him the most, and I admired him the most in his letter to David Hume, when he was certainly the maddest. As from this foretaste of his Memoirs, I conclude they will at least in this equal that letter, I shall read them with avidity whenever they reach my hands, because they will give me those humane emotions of pity, which many of his other works have given me; and I will never believe with you that his was either studied delirium, or affected frenzy, till I am absolutely compelled to it, and this for the sake of that compassionate feeling which his writings do and will excite in me so long as I can believe them written by a madman in good earnest. Prove him a pretender to insanity, and the charm vanishes; I shall then regard his eloquence as little as I do Chatterton's poetry. I hope you will think a second time before you resolve not to publish what you have written on this latter subject. I think that to say something about it to the world is a duty you owe to yourself. I shall hope, therefore, you will bring the MS. with you when we meet next month at Nuneham, and that you will publish it some time before Christmas. I have an hypothesis of my own concerning those poems, which I think I could make out to be at least highly probable, viz., that they were originally all written in modern English, and antiquitized after. Had I his modernisms now published, I would take one of them, and antiquitize it in two manners, à la Chaucer, and à la Chatterton, and I am persuaded that these two specimens would prove the matter clearer than all the critical arguments that either have or will be produced; and yet I think that T. Warton has done enough in that way to convince even the President of the Antiq. Society (if such President were ever capable of conviction), that he was of all forgerers the most palpable. All this, however, no more detracts from his poetical abilities than Rousseau's insanity does from his oratorical.

I am waiting here a visit from Giardini, in order to give him all the lights I can for the proper music to 'Sappho;' but whether he will come before or after York races, *i.e.* this next week, or the fortnight after, I am yet ignorant. At all adventures I hold myself in readiness to meet you at Nuneham the middle of Sept., if not sooner; though I have a visit to pay in Shropshire in my way, and mean from thence to come by Birmingham and the 'Leasowes.' All this however shall be lengthened or shortened according to your time of going to Nuneham, where I promise myself the greatest pleasure in meeting you. Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very cordially,
W. MASON.

Mr. Palgrave is with me, and desires his best compliments.

1750. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 15, 1778.

Your observation of Rowley not being mentioned by William of Wyrcestre, is very strong, indeed, dear Sir, and I shall certainly take notice of it. It has suggested to me that he is not mentioned by Bale or Pitts—is he? Will you trouble yourself to look? I conclude he is not, or we should have heard of it. Rowley is the reverse of King Arthur, and all those heroes that have been expected a second time; he is to come again for the first time—I mean, as a great poet. My Defence amounts to thirty pages of the size of this paper: yet I believe I shall not publish it. I abhor a controversy; and what is it to me whether people believe in an impostor or not? Nay, shall I convince everybody of my innocence, though there is not the shadow of reason for thinking I was to blame? If I met a beggar in the street, and refused him sixpence, thinking him strong enough to work, and two years afterwards he should die of drinking, might not I be told I had deprived the world of a capital rope-dancer? In short, to show one's self sensible to such accusations, would only invite more; and since they accuse me of contempt, I will have it for my accusers.

My brass plate for Bishop Walpole was copied exactly from the print in Dart's 'Westminster,' of the tomb of Robert [William] Dudley, Bishop of Durham, with the sole alteration of the name. I shall return, as soon as I have time, to Mr. Baker's 'Life;' but I shall want to consult you, or, at least the account of him in the new 'Biographia,' as your notes want some dates. I am not satisfied yet with what I have sketched; but I shall correct it. My small talent was grown very dull. This attack about Chatterton has a little revived it; but it warns me to have done; for, if one comes to want provocatives, the produce will soon be feeble. Adieu! Yours most sincerely.

1751. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 21, 1778.

I THINK it so very uncertain whether this letter will find you, that I write it merely to tell you I received yours to-day. I recollect nothing particularly worth seeing in Sussex that you have not seen (for

I think you have seen Cowdray and Stansted, and I know you have Petworth), but Hurst Monceaux, near Battle; and I don't know whether it is not pulled down. The site of Arundel Castle is fine, and there are some good tombs of the Fitzalans at the church, but little remains of the castle; in the room of which is a modern brick house; and in the late Duke's time the ghost of a giant walked there, his Grace said—but I suppose the present Duke has laid it in the Red Sea—of claret.

Besides Knowle and Penshurst, I should think there were several seats of old families in Kent worth seeing; but I do not know them. I poked out Summer-hill for the sake of the *Babylonienne* in Grammont; but it is now a mere farm-house. Don't let them persuade you to visit Leeds Castle, which is not worth seeing.

You have been near losing me and half-a-dozen fair cousins to-day. The Goldsmiths' Company dined in Mr. Shirley's[1] field, next to Pope's. I went to Ham with my three Waldegrave nieces and the Miss Keppel, and saw them land, and dine in tents erected for them from the opposite shore. You may imagine how beautiful the sight was in such a spot and in such a day! I stayed and dined at Ham, and after dinner Lady Dysart with Lady Bridget Tollemache took our four nieces on the water to see the return of the barges, but were to set me down at Lady Browne's. We were, with a footman and the two watermen, ten in a little boat. As we were in the middle of the river, a larger boat full of people drove directly upon us on purpose. I believe they were drunk. We called to them, to no purpose; they beat directly against the middle of our little skiff—but, thank you, did not do us the least harm—no thanks to them. Lady Malpas was in Lord Strafford's garden, and gave us for gone. In short, Neptune never would have had so beautiful a prize as the four girls.

I hear an express has been sent to * * * * to offer him the Mastership of the Horse. I had a mind to make you guess, but you never can—to Lord Exeter! Pray let me know the moment you return to Park-place.

[1] The Hon. George Shirley. His "freehold and copyhold villa and estate, containing twenty-five acres of rich land, on the banks of the Thames, at Twickenham, adjoining the villa of the late Alexander Pope," were sold by auction, at his decease, in 1788. His house went by the name of Spite Hall. See, *post*, to Lord Strafford, 9th Sept. 1780.—CUNNINGHAM.

1752. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 22, 1778.

I BEG you will feel no uneasiness, dear Sir, at having shown my name to Dr. Glynn. I can never suspect you, who are giving me fresh proofs of your friendship, and solicitude for my reputation, of doing anything unkind. It is true I do not think I shall publish anything about Chatterton. Is not it an affront to Innocence, not to be perfectly satisfied in her? My pamphlet, for such it would be, is four times as large as the Narrative in your hands, and I think would not discredit me—but, in truth, I am grown much fonder of truth than fame; and scribblers or their patrons shall not provoke me to sacrifice the one to the other. Lord Hardwicke, I know, has long been my enemy—latterly, to get a sight of the Conway Papers,[1] he has paid great court to me, which, to show how little I regarded his enmity, I let him see, at least the most curious. But as I set as little value on his friendship, I did not grant another of his requests. Indeed, I have made more than one foe by not indulging the vanity of those who have made application to me; and I am obliged to them, when they augment my contempt by quarrelling with me for that refusal. It was the case of Mr. Masters, and is now of Lord Hardwicke. He solicited me to reprint his Bœotian volume of Sir Dudley Carleton's Papers, for which he had two motives. The first he inherited from his father, the desire of saving money; for though his fortune is so much larger than mine, he knew I would not let out my press for hire, but should treat him with the expense, as I have done for those I have obliged. The second was, that the rarity of my editions makes them valuable, and though I cannot make men read dull books, I can make them purchase them. His Lordship, therefore, has bad grace in affecting to overlook one, whom he had in vain courted, yet he again is grown my enemy, because I would not be my own. For my writings, they do not depend on him or the venal authors he patronises (I doubt very frugally), but on their own merits or demerits. It is from men of sense they must expect their sentence, not from boobies and hireling authors, whom I have always shunned, with the whole fry of minor wits, critics, and monthly censors.

[1] The Conway Papers are now (1857), by the gift of the late Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, partly in the State Paper Office, and partly in the British Museum.—CUNNINGHAM.

I have not seen the [Critical] Review you mention, nor ever do but when something particular is pointed out to me. Literary squabbles I know preserve one's name, when one's work will not; but I despise the fame that depends on scolding till one is remembered, and remembered by whom? The scavengers of literature! Reviewers are like sextons, who, in a charnel-house, can tell you to what John Thompson or to what Tom Matthews such a skull or such belonged: but who wishes to know? The fame that is only to be found in such vaults, is like the fires that burn unknown in tombs, and go out as fast as they are discovered. Lord Hardwicke is welcome to live among the dead if he likes, and can contrive to live nowhere else.

Chatterton did abuse me under the title of Baron of Otranto,[1] but unluckily the picture is more like Dr. Milles and Chatterton's own devotees, than to me, who am but a recreant antiquary, and, as the poor lad found by experience, did not swallow every fragment that was offered to me as an antique; though that is a feature he has bestowed upon me.

I have seen, too, the criticism you mention on the 'Castle of Otranto,' in the preface to the 'Old English Baron.'[2] It is not at all oblique, but, though mixed with high compliments, directly attacks the visionary part, which, says the author or authoress, makes one laugh. I do assure you, I have not had the smallest inclination to return that attack. It would even be ungrateful, for the work is a professed imitation of mine, only stripped of the marvellous; and so entirely stripped, except in one awkward attempt at a ghost or two, that it is the most insipid dull nothing you ever saw. It certainly does not make one laugh; for what makes one doze, seldom makes one merry.

I am very sorry to have talked for near three pages on what relates to myself, who should be of no consequence, if people did not make me so, whether I will or not. My not replying to them, I hope, is a proof I do not seek to make myself the topic of conversation. How very foolish are the squabbles of authors! They buzz and are troublesome to-day, and then repose for ever on some shelf in a college library, close by their antagonists, like Henry VI. and Edward IV. at Windsor.

[1] Chatterton exhibited a ridiculous portrait of Walpole, in the 'Memoirs of a Sad Dog,' under the character of "the redoubted Baron Otranto, who has spent his whole life in conjectures."—Wright.

[2] A romance, by Clara Reeve.—Cunningham.

I shall be in town in a few days, and will send you the heads of Painters, which I left there; and along with them for yourself a translation of a French play,[1] that I have just printed there. It is not for your reading, but as one of the Strawberry editions, and one of the rarest; for I have printed but seventy-five copies. It was to oblige Lady Craven, the translatress; and will be an aggravation of my offence to Sir Dudley's State Papers.

I hope this Elysian summer, for it has been above Indian, has dispersed all your complaints. Yet it does not agree with fruit; the peaches and nectarines are shrivelled to the size of damsons, and half of them drop. Yet you remember what portly bellies the peaches had at Paris, where it is generally as hot. I suppose our fruit-trees are so accustomed to rain, that they don't know how to behave without it. Adieu!

P.S. I can divert you with a new adventure, that has happened to me in the literary way. About a month ago, I received a letter from a Mr. Jonathan Scott, at Shrewsbury, to tell me he was possessed of a MS. of Lord Herbert's Account of the Court of France,[2] which he designed to publish by subscription, and which he desired me to subscribe to, and to assist in the publication. I replied, that having been obliged to the late Lord Powis and his widow, I could not meddle with any such thing, without knowing that it had the consent of the present Earl and his mother.

Another letter, commending my reserve, told me Mr. Scott had applied for it formerly, and would again now. This showed me they did not consent. I have just received a third letter, owning the approbation is not yet arrived; but to keep me employed in the meantime, the modest Mr. Scott, whom I never saw, nor know more of than I did of Chatterton, proposes to me to get his fourth son a place in the civil department in India; the father not choosing it should be in the military, his three elder sons being engaged in that branch already. If this fourth son breaks his neck, I suppose it will be laid to my charge!

[1] 'The Sleep-Walker;' translated from the French of M. Pont de Veyle, by Lady Craven, afterwards Margravine of Anspach.—WRIGHT.

[2] By Lord Herbert's 'Account of the Court of France,' Mr. Scott most probably referred to his 'Letters written during his residence at the French Court,' and which were first published from the originals, in the edition of his Life which appeared in 1826.—WRIGHT.

1753. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Aug. 25, 1778.

You tell me, my dear Sir, that you depend so entirely on me for intelligence, at least for the confirmation of public events, that I must not let yesterday's Gazette go away to-night without writing you a line. Military narratives are apt to be a little oracular, and ours of late have wanted some additional obscurity. You will collect from yesterday's, that General Clinton's army did get to New York, though with some difficulty, which, ministerially, you are to take for a victory; and, wherever any darkness hangs over it, you must clear it up on our side. I divine that Washington was ill served, for he has brought two of his Generals to a court-martial; and the excessive heats seem to have fought against both armies. This is the quintessence of what I know of the matter; and, upon the whole, the Royal army has gained an escape—I doubt, not much to their comfort; for they find no plenty at New York, and Monsieur D'Estaign blocks up the fleet there: so, probably, accounts will not mend.

Our fleet at home has not sailed again. There are rumours of dissensions between Admiral Keppel and Sir Hugh Palliser, and even of a duel between them; which, however, I have heard from no good authority: in short, I have nothing agreeable to tell you, and I do not love to send anything that is not to the glory of my country 'cross the Channel.

The German peace seems to halt. I should think it, however, still in agitation, as no considerable action has happened. The Duke of Gloucester has yet received no answer from the Prussian, but expects it this week. He is determined to go if he is accepted—to every peril indeed, for his strength is not equal to it.

We have had the most marvellous summer that I ever remember in all my days. It is still sultry; and I am suffering, though I write between every open door and window in a back-room where the sun never enters. The harvest is prodigious; and we might have wine and oil, had we made preparations for them.

The Duke of Ancaster is dead, and the Mastership of the Horse to be disposed of.[1] This would have been an object in some sum-

[1] The Duke of Northumberland was made Master of the Horse.—Cunningham.

mers; but we do not want topics of conversation at present. I used to make excuses for the shortness of my letters at this season. That is not the case at present. I have given you the reason at the top of this page.[1] Adieu!

1754. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Aug. 25, 1778.

You have put an end, my dear Sir, to my thoughts of publishing my Narrative, for you have said in four lines all that I have been trying to say in thirty pages; so my *native eloquence*, which your partiality honours, proves what I have long suspected it was, only easy verbiage. In the early part of my life I wished to have it known that I was not a fool—doctors differ on the method and on the success: now, when I was grown much more indifferent to fame, you have bestowed on me more than I should ever have presumed to ask. I am now like people that have a ticket to Richmond Park, which they lend to others when they can go in without, by being known to be in favour with the proprietor; or like country squires returned for two places, who make their option for the county, and resign their family borough, on which perhaps there is not a tenement left standing. I choose my niche in your verses; and my namesakes (my uncle, my cousin, and his son) shall be welcome to all the memory that shall remain of writings under the appellation of H. W., reserving only what is said of individual me in the Life of Gray, whose monument [in Westminster Abbey], by the way, I shall visit to-morrow.

I must not say more of your poetry, because it is the only poetry of yours to which I may be partial; but when I have told you how exceedingly I am flattered by being immortalised in it, you may be sure I am content with my patent. I must too say no more, because without blending myself with you at least indirectly, I know not how to commend, and I should be the falsest as well as the vainest of mortals, if I made the smallest comparison between us. I hope you think I know enough of poetry, not to confound the genuine heir of the right line with a maker of prose—for poet, Phœbus knows I am not, and if I do not waive every sort of pre-

[1] *Vide* end of the second paragraph.—WALPOLE.

tension, it is only that you may not have bestowed an encomium on a subject totally worthless.

I should have replied to your last sooner, if I had been sure that you were not set out on your tour. I shall be ready to set out for Nuneham whenever I receive my summons.

It is but this moment that I am come to town, and would fulfil the duty of gratitude, before I inquired about the new engagement in America. For the Gazette account, I do not understand it, which is being a good subject, for, like other such relations, it is only meant to confound. All I do know is that on Sunday night the undisciplined courtiers spoke of it in most dismal terms. If I guess right Washington was ill served, and thence, and by the violent heats, could not effect all his purpose; but an army on a march through a hostile country, that is twice beaten back, which is owned, whose men drop down with heat, have no hospitals, and were hurrying to a place of security, must have lost more than 380 men. In fact they were hurrying whence they could not stay into the last trap. They will be starved into surrender or desperation at New York; and D'Estaign is blocking up our port and fleet, and a swingeing lie will the Gazette have to tell, if both army and fleet are taken.

The papers say that Keppel and Palliser have fought a duel; I do not know how truly. The reason given in the papers is *not* the true, if another that has been whispered is; namely that Palliser did not obey Keppel's signal, though the former at first behaved bravely; and is not suspected of want of spirit, but of Mindenian finesse, and that by secret order of the Trident-bearer. Keppel was much insulted at Plymouth, by the same direction as supposed; and that provocation may have brought out what was at first suppressed. However, I affirm nothing of all this, though I have heard enough by different channels to incline me to believe there is an appearance of foundation in the groundwork; though it is impossible to conceive that revenge could have blinded an old politician so far, as to have made him lose all sight of the advantage that would have accrued even to himself from a victory.

In short, disgraces and misfortunes thicken so fast, that I believe there will be no time to unravel half, while there is an opportunity, supposing there were one. History will be forced to poke and patch out scraps, and when the whole is a heap of ruins, some David Hume will be to compose a system of wise and virtuous motives, which always tend to produce folly and crimes, and then the

induction will be, that nobody should be wise and virtuous. Adieu! Adieu!

P.S. You may imagine I am impatient for the sequel.

EPISTLE

FROM THE REV. WILLIAM MASON

TO

THE HONOURABLE HORACE WALPOLE,

— [1778.]

To brand imposture, to detect a Knave,
Who else might slink secure into his grave,
Some years ago, my Walpole! had its merit,
While yet remain'd a gleam of Public-spirit.
When Douglas pluck'd the mask from Lauder's face,
Douglas was thought to do a deed of grace,
When a like touch of his Ithuriel's spear
Bad Archy Bower in full-blown fraud appear,
And from a martyr, change into a cheat,
Full sure the Doctor did a doughty feat.
Egregious Scot! who hot, in Truth's defence,
Beat up his namesake's Stews for evidence.
And, though each Rogue was of his Mother Nation,
Disdain'd to give their Lies a Dispensation.
Egregious Scot! if Fame my Verse can give,
Long as that Verse (at least) thy Name shall live.
But times are chang'd e'en Douglas' self must own,
Since Scottish King-craft reassumed the throne.
Now Bower and Lauder, were they both alive,
With Wit would figure, and by Parts would thrive.
Ill-fated Pair! whom that blind Midwife Time
Dragg'd into birth some years before their prime;
And ruthless Death drove to the realms of night
Some years before our glorious Fifty-eight.
Else, worthy Pair! crown'd with a Court's attention,
Macpherson's self had got but half your pension,
And still inspir'd by hunger's urgent call,
Created every month a new Fingal.
Ah burn then, Horace! thy ill-timed Defence,[1]
Truth, drest in all thy native eloquence,
Will nought avail. Thou stand'st (as I am told)
Indicted for a Crime, full ten years old,
" For that, not having 'fore thy eyes the fear,
" Of Grub Street, thy proud heart disdain'd to hear
" A Stranger Boy, who sent thee a rich store
" Of Saxon, Norman, and heraldic lore;
" With manie a Rime, coygnd by thilk craftie Skylle,
" As cherisonde[2] the herte of gode Deane Mylle;

[1] That is, Walpole's defence of himself respecting Chatterton.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Cherisonde, pleased or comforted. Chatterton made the noun Cherisaune, and I on equal authority have made the verb.—MASON.

" Nay turn'd him, on this wicked town, to graze,
" Without his pittance or of pence or praise;
" Because (I blush the reason to repeat)
" Only, because you thought the boy a cheat."—
" I think so still."—This, Sir, is no denial;
'Tis pleading guilty; it impedes your Trial;
Disown the general Charge, and let us bring
The council of our Sovraign Lord the King,
Even Sawney's self,[1] in his new silken gown
To prove the fact, as Plaintiff for the Crown.

The Attorney-General's speech in our next

" It hurts me (Gentlemen upon the Jury),
It hurts my finer feelings, I assure ye,
To try the strength of my forensic arts
Against a Man of the defendant's parts;
Who, had he lived in the third Richard's reign,
Had been Lord Steward, or Lord Chamberlain.[2]
I say it hurts me much, that such a man
Should draw his line on this contracted plan;
So falsely delicate; so over-nice;
To deem poetic forgery a Vice.
To this all Poets plead prescription wholly,
I won't except Old Ossian, or Old Rowley:
Whether they lived, is immaterial quite,
A want of Being[3] bars no claim of Right.
Not to discriminate is mighty odd,
'Tween Thomas Chatterton and Doctor Dodd.
Pope said 'tis true, when Pope possess'd that name,
He[4] thought a lie in verse and prose the same.
But will his friend Lord Mansfield find it Law?
In Pope's Reports 'tis not the single flaw.
There are who do not by his code abide
Which reads, that 'Murray[5] is his Country's Pride.'
Lawyers there are, and on that side am I,
Who ground it on his privilege to lie,
Yet still demur, whether such power extend,
To vest for life his leasings in his friend.
But waiving this as one of Pope's old flaws,
I enter on the merits of the cause.
" A Youth is dead. Felo de se, or not.
By P— or Poison matters not a jot.

[1] Wedderburn.—Cunningham.

[2] Alluding to his 'Historic Doubts respecting Richard III.' Compare note in vol. i. p. li; and add:—" If you don't come to town soon, I will give you warning, I will be a Lord of the Bedchamber, or a Gentleman Usher.—*Walpole to Montagu*, 7 *January*, 1760. " The Aristocracy of Noble Authors to whom I am Gentleman Usher."—*Walpole to Mason*, 28 *May*, 1780.—Cunningham.

[3] The Attorney's assertion seems to militate a little against common sense; it is nevertheless good law. It may be argued " that a man who was never alive, was incapable of committing a forgery," but the question here is not of competency but of right. A married man may be incompetent to beget children, but the right to beget them legally is still in him. The case is exactly parallel, both rights being dormant.—Mason.

[4] See Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, v. 339.—Mason.

[5] Where Murray, long enough his Country's Pride
Shall be no more than Tully or than Hyde.
Pope, Epistle 6, v. 53.—Mason.

A Youth is dead, who might have been alive,
Had the Defendant found him means to thrive;
Lodg'd him at Strawberry Hill, in decent dress,
And made him the Corrector of his Press.
Why did he not?—His reason I repeat,
Only because he thought the youth a cheat.
" Ridiculous!—If Pleas so very weak
Be held admissible; let Camden take
The Steerage of the State; for North and I
Will yield the office mighty readily.
Who'll fit your fleets to give the French a beating,
If you prohibit them the right of cheating?
Or one sound loaf for all Coxheath procure?
I'll answer for my Countryman—not Muir.[1]
Your camps must starve, your Navy be undone—
Expedients fail ye; and Contractors shun.
Where will you find, I pray, so great a novice,
Will serve without his perquisites of office?
Who without plate, and ———— pounds a day,
Will beg your pardon from America?
That man must be a Bramin, or a Dervis,
Who will not sip the sweets of secret Service.
" His Grace of Richmond plagued us all last year
With calculations; making it appear,
In spite of all the trifling sums we granted,
How much our Army and our Navy wanted.
He miss'd the mark, e'en grant his reasoning true;
I have a greater want than these in view.
Poor if we be in land and water fighters,
We're poorer still in Ministerial writers.
Broad-tongued Shebbeare like every other dog
Has had his day.—Johnson is grown a log.
Home and Macpherson now their weambs[2] are full,
Grow very indolent and very dull.
To own the truth, we Scots have found a way
To get for all we publish double pay—
And write at once for Cadell, and Sir Gray.
For this sage end, we ne'er condense our Sense,
But spread o'er Quartos our thin Eloquence;
Scorning in pamphlet channels to confine
The Torrent of our Energy divine.
While English Readers hate a bulky book,
And leave the Lake, to tipple at the Brook.
But he the youth whose loss we now deplore
Which loss we lie at the defendant's door,
Was Bristow born, yet 'tis by all agreed
He'd parts might figure e'en beyond the Tweed.'

To be continued[3] but I know not when, for I am at present much interrupted, and

[1] A man who after gaining 50 per cent. by his contract for rum, now furnishes all the camps with bread.—MASON.

[2] A Scottish name for bellies.—MASON.

[3] Mason wrote about twenty lines more, of which the following forms the part immediately succeeding the last printed couplet.

" Who thence translated by the royal nod,
Might change in Pharaoh's Court like Aaron's rod,
Curl round the closet, lift its ruby crest,
A sly, sleek serpent, swallowing all the rest.

am besides preparing for my journey. If the person[1] who brings this should chance to meet with you at home, he will tell you all I know of myself, and of my motions, nor is he ignorant of the contents, for I know he may be trusted. I would not wish you to write here to me again; but in about a fortnight from this time, I hope to be at a Place where I would much rather meet you than your Letter, though I should like to meet both, or your Letter a day before you.

Ye Courtly Heroes who so boldly vote
To cut America's collective throat
And hope to tear her limb from limb asunder
With Johnson's, Eden's, and Lord Carlisle's thunder
Your threats are vain, your very looks are fibs.
Cowards! ye quake at crackers and at squibs,
Trembling lest every stone the rabble darts
Should break the casement of your guilty hearts.

I have put your thought into careless verse; if you think it will do, I leave you to do what you please with it, for I have not a moment's time, the care of my poor child 'Elfrida' engrosses all my attention.

1755. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Aug. 2 [6 ?], 1778.

I HAVE seen Gray's monument. The absolutely necessary position is very disadvantageous to it, and prevents any grace in the outline; his nose is a little too aquiline, but both his head and the Muse's are well executed;[2] her body is a little flat, and her legs, from the same want of place, too small and crowded; your epitaph and friendship are the most shining ingredients.

When I mention your friendship for him, I recollect that I was too much intoxicated in my last with your partiality to me. I mean that I did not receive it with humility enough; but in the satisfaction of being recorded by you forgot how little I deserve it. As there has been so much of blameable in my life, I am conscious that I ought to desire to be spoken of by my enemies, and not by my friends, that the truth may be told, not palliated. To ask that, would be an artful way of avoiding it. I have been told, that what I begged you to say of my being the first to blame in my differences

Oh! let me, ravish'd with a thought so new,
Give better fancy a prophetic view,
A glimpse of what the stripling might have been,
If not frost-nipt by the defendant's spleen.
Yes, let me place in full meridian light,
Visions that burst upon my second sight,
That second sight which many a Scot possesses,
Heaven's gift—as rambling Johnson half confesses," &c.

MITFORD.

[1] Baynes, the friend of Ritson.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] It is by the elder Bacon.—CUNNINGHAM.

with Gray, persuaded some that the reverse was true.[1] I am sure *that* was not my intention; and I would say it still more strongly, if it would not look affected. I have a horror for any praise that one does not deserve: humility is next to vain-glory, if it is put on, and has no merit but in avoiding impudence. Simplicity is the medium to be sought, and silence about one's self the surest way of being simple. A corner in your writings which you have allotted to me, I am not lowly enough to waive; but I have regard enough for you to desire that you should never say any thing of me that you may be ashamed of. Remember, your writings will be standards, and remember too that Pope's blindness to Bolingbroke took off the edge of half his satires. I shall not suffer you to hurt your own fame in compliment to me; early and late have I despised Cicero's *orna me*. Has one better claim to praise one has not earned, than to money one has stolen? And to beg one's friend to lie for one! No, my dear Sir, there are a few honest good men that deserve such verses as yours: I should think I robbed them, while they want your praise.

28 *Aug.* I had written thus far, when I received your second part[2] by Mr. Alderson. You desire me not to write, but to bring you my answer, and odd as the request is, I shall obey it, for two reasons; the first is, that the impression of your seal is so sharp, that I am convinced all or most of those you send by the post have been opened; the second is, that your modesty would not permit me to tell you to your face how much I am charmed with your poetry. You have an original talent for this style, that without resembling either, is much more like Horace's than Pope's was; and instead of piddling with petty dunces, you gibbet greater dunces and much greater rogues. Nay, you do what History cannot; for you record their villanies, and if History's majestic gravity could contrive to register them, yet nobody would read what ought to be enrolled only by the Ordinary of Newgate; but when you make your readers laugh at our state culprits, they will remember them.

[1] They quarrelled, and parted; and Mr. Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look, however, without prejudice on the world, we shall find that men, whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough in their association with superiors to watch their own dignity with troublesome and punctilious jealousy, and in the fervour of independence to exact that attention which they refused to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel; and the rest of their travels was doubtless more unpleasant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner suitable to his own little fortune, with only an occasional servant.—*Johnson* (*Life of Gray*).—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] That is, of his Epistle, in verse, to Walpole.—CUNNINGHAM.

There are two odd renconters in your second part that I must mention. You have introduced the Duke of Richmond, who is one of the virtuous few that is worthy of such a pen as yours (and was in my eye in the foregoing page), and you have brought in Pope, and Lord Mansfield, which I have done too in my Narrative, as you will see, though for a different quotation; but, in short, you have made my Narrative useless; you have anticipated it by inspiration, and Apollo has made you a prophet as well as a poet. I that knew all the circumstances, have told tediously what you, by magic I think, have set in a ten times clearer light and compendiously. And as I owed to you and Gray the confirmation of my doubts at first,[1] you have told all that is necessary of my story for me, and made it entertaining. Remember this is not to flatter you, and draw more panegyric from you. You have justified me in as innocent a transaction as any of my life, and I am more than satisfied, and the best way of thanking you is to be jealous of your honour, and to turn it on more meritorious objects. I do not deserve praise: to justify the innocent is worthy of you. If I was not irreproachable on the article of Chatterton, I assure you I would tell you so, for instead of being pleased with your defence, it would aggravate my contrition, and therefore I beg you will never put me to shame. My parts are moderate, and I trouble my head little about them; but I would give a pound of them, if I have so much, for an ounce more of virtues.

The crisis of this country will soon put all men to the test; brand the guilty and reward the good; and since the fountain of honour is now the channel of corruption, wrench the chalice from his hand and dispense the waters to the deserving. The moment is coming I think when the constitution may be restored, though not the empire. If they who call themselves patriots, flinch from their duty, they will deserve your lash, still more than the present crew. I have no great hopes, though the moment is so propitious (as it is a repetition of precedent lessons) for showing that the folly of tyranny leads directly to the destruction of darling prerogative. I have sometimes thought, so servile has been the copy, that Lord Mansfield has drawn out the steps of James II., and recommended

[1] "I communicated the poems to Mr. Gray and Mr. Mason, who at once pronounced them forgeries, and declared there was no symptom in them of their being the production of near so distant an age; the language and metres being totally unlike anything ancient; for though I, no doubt to them, ascribed them to the time of Richard I., Mr. Gray nor Mr. Mason saw anything in the poems that was not more recent than even the reign of Henry VIII."—*Walpole*, Letter to the Editor of the 'Miscellanies of Chatterton.'—*Works*, vol. iv. p. 222.—CUNNINGHAM.

them one by one, in order to ruin the House of Hanover by the same manœuvres that paved their way to the Crown. Or he was a woful or a most presumptuous politician, to flatter himself he could succeed where Jefferies and Jesuits failed. In short, he and the Scotch have no way of redeeming the credit of their understandings, but by avowing that they have been consummate villains. *Stavano bene; per star meglio, stanno quì.*

1756. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Sept. 1, 1778.

I HAVE now seen the 'Critical Review,' with Lord Hardwicke's note, in which I perceive the sensibility of your friendship for me, dear Sir, but no rudeness on his part. Contemptuous it was to reprint Jane Shore's letter without any notice of my having given it before: the apology, too, is not made to me—but I am not affected by such incivilities, that imply more ill-will than boldness. As I expected more from your representation, I believe I expressed myself with more warmth than the occasion deserved; and, as I love to be just, I will, now I am perfectly cool, be so to Lord Hardwicke. His dislike of me was meritorious in him, as I conclude it was founded on my animosity to *his* father, as mine had been, from attachment to *my own*, who was basely betrayed by the late Earl. The present has given me formerly many peevish marks of enmity; and I suspect, I don't know if justly, that he was the mover of the cabal in the Antiquarian Society against me; but all their misunderstandings were of a size that made me smile rather than provoked me. The Earl, as I told you, has since been rather wearisome in applications to me; which I received very civilly, but encouraged no farther. When he wanted me to be his printer, I own I was not good Christian enough, not to be pleased with refusing, and yet in as well-bred excuses as I could form, pleading, what was true at the time, as you know, that I had laid down my press—but so much for this idle story. I shall think no more of it, but adhere to my specific system.

The Antiquarians will be as ridiculous as they used to be; and, since it is impossible to infuse taste into them, they will be as dry and dull as their predecessors. One may revive what perished, but it will perish again, if more life is not breathed into it than it enjoyed originally. Facts, dates, and names will never please the

multitude, unless there is some style and manner to recommend them, and unless some novelty is struck out from their appearance. The best merit of the Society lies in their prints; for their volumes, no mortal will ever touch them but an antiquary. Their Saxon and Danish discoveries are not worth more than monuments of the Hottentots; and for Roman remains in Britain, they are upon a foot with what ideas we should get of Inigo Jones, if somebody was to publish views of huts and houses, that our officers run up at Senegal and Goree. Bishop Lyttelton used to torment me with barrows and Roman camps, and I would as soon have attended to the turf graves in our churchyards. I have no curiosity to know how awkward and clumsy men have been in the dawn of arts, or in their decay.

I exempt you entirely from my general censure on antiquaries, both for your singular modesty in publishing nothing yourself, and for collecting stone and bricks for others to build with. I wish your materials may ever fall into good hands—perhaps they will! our empire is falling to pieces! we are relapsing to a little island. In that state, men are apt to inquire how great their ancestors have been; and, when a kingdom is past doing anything, the few that are studious look into the memorials of past time; nations, like private persons, seek lustre from their progenitors, when they have none in themselves, and the farther they are from the dignity of their source. When half its colleges are tumbled down, the ancient University of Cambridge will revive from your Collections,[1] and you will be quoted as a living witness that saw its splendour.

Since I began this letter, I have had another curious adventure. I was in the Holbein Chamber, when a chariot stopped at my door.

[1] Mr. Cole, on his death in 1782, left his valuable Collections, in about a hundred volumes, in folio, fairly written in his own hand, to the British Museum, to be locked up for twenty years. His Diary, as will be seen by a specimen or two, is truly ludicrous:—"Jan. 25, 1766. Foggy. My beautiful parrot died at ten at night, without knowing the cause of his illness, he being very well last night.—Feb. 1. Fine day, and cold. Will Wood carried three or four loads of dung into the clay-pit close. Baptized William, the son of William Grace, blacksmith, whom I married about six months before.—March 3. I baptized Sarah, the bastard daughter of the Widow Smallwood, of Eton, aged near fifty, whose husband died about a year ago.—March 6. Very fine weather. My man was blooded. I sent a loin of pork and a spare-rib to Mr. Cartwright, in London.—27. I sent my two French wigs to my London barber to alter them, they being made so miserably I could not wear them.—June 17. I went to our new Archdeacon's visitation at Newport-Paguel. I took young H. Travel with me on my dun horse, in order that he might hear the organ, he being a great psalm-singer. The most numerous appearance of clergy that I remember: forty-four dined with the Archdeacon; and, what is extraordinary, not one smoked tobacco. My new coach-horse ungain.—Aug. 16. Cool day. Tom reaped for Joe Holdom. I cudgelled Jem for staying so long on an errand," &c.—WRIGHT.

A letter was brought up—and who should be below but—Dr. Kippis. The letter was to announce himself and his business, flattered me on my writings, desired my assistance, and particularly my direction and aid for his writing the life of my father. I desired he would walk up, and received him very civilly, taking not the smallest notice of what you had told me of his flirts at me in the new 'Biographia.' I told him, if I had been applied to, I could have pointed out many errors in the old edition, but as they were chiefly in the printing, I supposed they would be corrected. With regard to my father's life, I said, it might be partiality, but I had such confidence in my father's virtues, that I was satisfied the more his life was examined, the clearer they would appear; that I also thought that the life of any man written under the direction of his family, did nobody honour; and that, as I was persuaded my father's would stand the test, I wished that none of his relations should interfere in it; that I did not doubt but the Doctor would speak impartially, and that was all I desired. He replied, that he did suppose I thought in that manner, and that all he asked was to be assisted in facts and dates. I said, if he would please to write the life first, and then communicate it to me, I would point out any errors in facts that I should perceive. He seemed mightily well satisfied—and so we parted—but is it not odd, that people are continually attacking me, and then come to me for assistance?—but when men write for profit, they are not very delicate.

I have resumed Mr. Baker's Life, and pretty well arranged my plan; but I shall have little time to make any progress till October, as I am going soon to make some visits. Yours ever.

1757. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1778.

I SHOULD not for one moment have delayed thanking your Lordship for the honour of your very kind invitation if I had not been absent, and did not receive it till last night, when I returned from Park-place after the post was gone. I had gone thither to keep Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury company on the death of Lord William Campbell, and was frightened home by an attack of the gout in my knee, which prevents me, my dear Lord, from daring to name a day for having the great pleasure of waiting on your Lordship and Lady Harcourt. I do hope to execute my wish on Monday

next, for the motion of the chaise has removed the pain into my foot, and when it flutters about I have seldom found it to end in a fit; yet vexatious as it would be to lose my visit to Nuneham, it would mortify me still more to trouble your Lordship with my decrepitude, and therefore be assured I will not venture if I am not quite well, and as *Herculean* as ever. My best friends shall not be troubled with my moans, nor my enemies neither, though the last sooner; and yet I abhor Lady Mary Wortley, who said, "People wish their enemies dead—but I do not; I say give them the gout, give them the stone!" indeed I would not give them a bodily pang—a little twitch in their minds, that would make them feel for others, would be rather wholesome.

I must not omit my compliments on Colonel Harcourt's marriage,[1] and yet it is not with perfect cordiality. It is not thence I wish for a Lord Nuneham. Pray forgive me; in friendship I am a Tory, and love the right line, though I desire the house of Harcourt may reach to the end of the world, as it has reached from the beginning.

I beg your Lordship's prayers for those that are to travel by land or water, or rather that they may travel, and pray do it as sincerely and fervently as he does for whom your prayers are desired.

Your Lordship's
Most faithful and obedient
Humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. Your Lordship authorises me and therefore I presume to add the following words to an Israelite indeed:—

TO MR. MASON.

Vide in my writing-box a long letter that will clear me from your accusation; and the reasons why I choose to bring it myself, moreover I have waited time out of mind for Mr. Alderson. I pressed him to come and see my house, and flattered myself that would be a temptation; but he is a Priest,

And Strawberry must yield to Sion Hill

As to wanting the conclusion, I do ardently, especially if it is ad

[1] The Hon. Colonel Harcourt, only brother to the Earl of Harcourt, married 21st Sept. 1778, Mrs. Lockhart, widow of Thomas Lockhart, of Craighouse, in Scotland: and eldest daughter of the Rev. William Danby, D. D.—CUNNINGHAM.

infinitum. Do you think I can have enough of you, of you *issime?* do you imagine I have no self-love? am I so accustomed to flattery as to be surfeited with it? am I to be praised in every Magazine like Garrick and Dr. Johnson; and if not satiated with panegyrics, do I write them on myself, like the former? do I not know that a line of yours will preserve me like a fly in amber? what do you think is come to me? In short, in self-defence I must tell you why I did not send away my letter. I have done such justice on myself in it, on your account, that my modesty would not hold out; and though I shall be rigorously just enough to trust you with my confession, I could not bring myself to stand in a sheet before the clerks of the Post Office, and I am too idle to write a letter over again—so much for that.

I sit feeling and handling and probing myself from hand to foot and putting myself to pain, in trying if the gout is gone. I am just like Harlequin, when he was tickling himself to death. If it does not come before Monday, I shall think myself safe. I was rejoiced to be got home; but when I came up into the Blue Room, and found Lord Harcourt's letter, I was out of my wits; yet I do not despair, as the journey has shifted the seat of the pain, which I always reckon a good symptom. I have begged the prayers of Lord Harcourt and his congregation, but I will have none of yours: they are not worth a straw. Should we be in such a dismal situation, if you could have prayed us out of it? The English clergy have prayed for popery and slavery, and drawn down miseries on us, that will not be suspended for your deprecations, because folly and iniquity are punished by their natural consequences.

My commission to you shall be to lay my homage at Miss Fauquier's feet, which will make it more agreeable. I shall be very happy or very miserable on Monday on all your accounts, as no party could be assembled more to the liking of my heart, but I must not trespass too much in a Postscript, for which I again beg Lord Harcourt's pardon. You will oblige me, dear Sir, if you will drop in conversation that Lady Craven has lately allowed me to print *at my press* her translation of the Somnambule; and pray observe if no one in the company seems to feel a *soupçon* of remorse. I shall not tell you why, but I have my reasons.

1758. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1778.

Your last is of August 22nd, and mine of the 25th. Since then I could have told you of nothing but expectations; nor are they realised yet. Admiral Keppel has been hunting for the Brest fleet, which has either gone southward, or is dodging in and out of their ports: at least he had not found it. But if the god of sea-fights does not smile, the god of merchantmen has wrought miracles: all our fleets are come in from Portugal, the West Indies, and every other mart: he has been as cunning as if he were the demon of smugglers.

Letters are arrived too from New York. D'Estaign had quitted that blockade, and was thought to be sailed to attack Rhode Island. Lord Howe has gone after him with an inferior force, but, as they say, hoping to be joined by six of Byron's squadron; which six are come to light again, and were not far off. Of that Admiral not a word. This is the quintessence of all I know.

In my family we are very happy that the King of Prussia has sent the Duke a most handsome excuse, being afraid of exposing a constitution so delicate as his Royal Highness's to the fatigues of a latter campaign; so *that* anxiety is at an end! Prince Henry's success has not availed much. Having devoured the country, the Prussians have been forced to step back. The people that have been devoured count for nothing.

Your Duchess of Kingston is a paltry mountebank. It is too ridiculous to have airs after conviction. Mrs. Anne Pitt, I hear, is arrived. Her nephew, Mr. Thomas Pitt, I believe, you will see ere long. A weakness is fallen on his knees, and made him a cripple. He is, I think, set out for Italy, like Æneas, with his Creusa, her father of eighty-seven, and two sucking babes.[1] Let me give you a caution: he and I have never been on more than civil terms since Mr. Grenville's reign.[2] He now swears by the ghost of his uncle Chatham, whom in those days he detested.

I saw Mr. Mackenzie last week, who spoke of you with the

[1] Mr. Thomas Pitt, in 1783 created Lord Camelford, married, in 1771, the daughter and co-heir of Pinkney Wilkinson, Esq., of Burnham in Norfolk; by whom he had one son, Thomas his successor, who was killed in a duel in 1804, and one daughter, who, in 1792, was married to William, Lord Grenville.—Wright.

[2] They quarrelled about Mr. Conway. See vol. iv. p. 139.—Cunningham.

heartiest kindness; and so does Lady Betty.[1] Lady Chesterfield is dead, at above fourscore. She was not a girl when she came over with George I.

What can I tell you more? My politics, beyond facts, would be but the conjectures of a private dreamer. Yet I am ashamed to send such a sippet of a letter; especially when you are impatient for mine, and reckon on and depend upon them. But you would not trust to them, if I were not cautious not to send you anything but truths; no easy task, if I were not brief. Ten thousand lies are propagated every week, not only by both sides, but by stock-jobbers; for those grave folks, monied citizens, contribute exceedingly to embroil and confound History, which was not very authentic before they were spawned. Newspapers, that ought to facilitate intelligence, are the vehicles of lies, and blunders, and scandal; and Truth, which formerly could trudge ten miles on foot, cannot now get along the road for the crowds of counterfeits. An historian, who shall consult the Gazettes of the times, will write as fabulous a romance as Gargantua.

You will wish to know something of Spain's intentions. I am sure I cannot satisfy you. She has a fleet, and she arms; but her Ambassador[2] is here—if to blind us, his purpose is not quite answered, for many have no faith in him. On the other hand, though at war with France, neither country takes notice of it. The English pass through Calais as quietly as just after a peace.

The Spanish Ambassador, whose size makes him look as if he represented the King of Lilliput, diverts the town with his gallantries, which are not at all in the style of the novels of his country, nor consist in mere serenades. He made a visit lately to a house of ill odour, and, though they say his wife is jealous, he left his two footmen at the door with flambeaux. His generosity, too, was not of a piece with the masters of Peru. He gave the nymph but half-a-guinea, and a shilling to the maid. As a pigmy does not pay with his person, the damsels made much noise against the receipt of silver pennies, which might be in proportion to his stature, but not to his character. To stifle their clamours, he declared he was the Venetian Resident; and now he has a quarrel on his hands with that Minister for the double scandal.

[1] Lady Elizabeth Campbell, third daughter of John Duke of Argyll.—WALPOLE.
[2] Count Almodovar.—WALPOLE.

1759. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 18, 1778.

I HAVE run through the new articles in the 'Biographia,' and think them performed but by a heavy hand. Some persons have not trusted the characters of their ancestors, as I did my father's, to their own merits. On the contrary, I have met with one whose corruption is attempted to be palliated by imputing its punishment to the revenge of my father—which, by the way, is confessing the guilt of the convict. This was the late Lord Barrington,[1] who, I believe, was a very dirty fellow; for, besides being expelled the House of Commons on the affair of the Harburgh lottery, he was reckoned to have twice sold the Dissenters to the Court; but in short, what credit can a 'Biographia Britannica,' which ought to be a standard work, deserve, when the editor is a mercenary writer, who runs about to relations for directions, and adopts any tale they deliver to him? This very instance is a proof that it is not a jot more creditable than a Peerage. The authority is said to be a nephew of Judge Foster (consequently, I suppose, a friend of Judge Barrington), and he pretends to have found a scrap of paper, nobody knows on what occasion written, that seems to be connected with nothing, and is called a palliative, if not an excuse of Lord Barrington's crime. A man is expelled from Parliament for a scandalous job, and it is called a sufficient excuse to say the Minister was his enemy; and this nearly forty years after the death of both! and without any impeachment of the justice of the sentence: instead of which we are told that Lord Barrington was *suspected* of having offended Sir Robert Walpole, who took that opportunity of being revenged. Supposing he did—which at most you see is a suspicion grounded on a suspicion—it would at least imply, that he had found a good opportunity.—A most admirable acquittal! Sir Robert Walpole was expelled for having indorsed a note that was not for his own benefit, nor ever supposed to be, and it was the act of a whole outrageous

[1] John Shute, first Viscount Barrington in the peerage of Ireland, expelled the House of Commons, in February 1723, for having promoted, abetted, and carried on that fraudulent undertaking, the Harburgh Lottery. This lottery took its name from the place where it was to be drawn, the town and port of Harburgh, on the river Elbe, where the projector was to settle a trade for the woollen manufacture between England and Germany. He died in 1734, leaving five sons, who had the rare fortune of each rising to high stations in the church, the state, the law, the army, and the navy.—WRIGHT.

party; yet, abandoned as Parliaments sometimes are, a Minister would not find them very complaisant in gratifying his private revenge against a member without some notorious crime. Not a syllable is said of any defence the culprit made; and, had my father been guilty of such violence and injustice, it is totally incredible that he, whose minutest acts and his most innocent were so rigorously scrutinised, tortured, and blackened, should never have heard that act of power complained of. The present Lord Barrington, who opposed him, saw his fall, and the secret committee appointed to canvass his life, when a retrospect of twenty years was desired and only ten allowed, would certainly have pleaded for the longer term, had he had anything to say in behalf of his father's sentence. Would so warm a patriot then, though so obedient a courtier now, have suppressed the charge to this hour? This Lord Barrington, when I was going to publish the second edition of my 'Noble Authors,' begged it as a favour of me to suppress all mention of his father—a strong presumption that he was ashamed of him. I am well repaid! but I am certainly now at liberty to record that good man. I shall—and shall take notice of the satisfactory manner in which his sons have whitewashed their patriarch!

I recollect a saying of the present peer [Lord Barrington] that will divert you when contrasted with forty years of servility, which even in this age makes him a proverb. It was in his days of virtue. He said, "If I should ever be so unhappy as to have a place that would make it necessary for me to have a fine coat on a birth-day, I would pin a bank-bill on my sleeve." He had a place in less than two years, I think—and has had almost every place that every Administration could bestow.[1] Such were the patriots that opposed that excellent man, my father; allowed by all parties to have been as incapable of revenge as ever minister was—but whose experience of mankind drew from him that memorable saying, "that very few men ought to be prime ministers, for it is not fit many should know how bad men are;"—one can see a little of it without being a prime minister. If one shuns mankind and flies to books, one meets with their meanness and falsehood there, too! one has reason to say, there is but one good, that is God. Adieu! Yours ever.

[1] Among the Mitchell MSS. is a letter from Lord Barrington, in which he says, "No man knows what is good for him: my invariable rule, therefore, is to ask nothing, to refuse nothing; to let others place me, and to do my best wherever I am placed. The same strange fortune which made me secretary of war five years ago, has made me chancellor of the exchequer; it may perhaps at last make me pope. I think I am equally fit to be at the head of the church as the exchequer."—WRIGHT.

1760. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Sunday evening, Sept. 27, 1778.

I CANNOT let the first evening of my return home pass, my dear Lord, without telling you how happy I was, and am, with the four days I enjoyed at Nuneham. The sensation was more than pleasure, for the reflection is as dear as the reality. To experience so much goodness and friendship from those one most esteems, contents every feeling, and flatters every vanity, nay, would force vanity upon one, were one ever so humble. Pray allow my gratitude to say thus much: shall impudent adulation give what doses it will, shall power swallow them and be ready for more, and shall not I thank your Lordship for honouring me with the select distinction of your friendship, because you have no post to bestow, and I ambition none? It would be hard indeed if sincere professions were to be abolished, because falsehood chooses to profess. When I go to seats of power, or when your Lordship shall blush to receive my homage—from the conscience of not deserving it, why then I shall have no call to offer it, for there will be no room for me at Nuneham.

Were I to fulfil all the duties I contracted this last week, I should write to Lady Harcourt too, but she is too bashful to hear what I would say, and I know will receive it with more pleasure from your Lordship,

> Her husband the Relator she prefers
> Before an angel.

In one word, though not the most beautiful of Lady Harcourt's compositions, not one pleased me so much as her lines on your Lordship's birthday. They contain such a picture of virtue and felicity, that they deserve a Spectator by Mr. Addison; not that he could do justice to them, but having the talent of preaching, and of yet being fashionable, the verses, with his commentary, would have been an immortal memorial of an union that deserves to be an immortal model. These above all I beg to print, that I in my generation may do some good. The poem occasioned by the censures on the Duchess of Kingston is of higher class, and another lecture of morality and good-nature united. I know they will lose in the impression—I mean as I heard them, for after Lady Harcourt had conquered her timidity and amiable modesty, I never heard any lady read so well In short, my Lord, you will not deserve such a wife, if once in your

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

life you do not command. No man has a right to marry a Muse and engross her. You must order her to appoint me her Printer, nor will I be Harcourt Pursuivant if I am not their Typographer too, but I have not said a word of my gratitude to Lady Harcourt; yes, I hope all this page has breathed it. To suppress a vast deal is the best proof of the rest.

I cannot quit such a society without begging a thousand compliments to Miss Fauquier, who merits such friends, and who does as much honour to their choice as they do to her. But in truth, I am come back in such raptures, that I doubt whether I am not rather drunk with self-love, than an enthusiast to the virtues and good sense resident at Nuneham. Well! we shall see. When you are all three given up for fools, &c., &c., &c., I will allow that I was an old idiot to be so blind. Till then, allow me to be passionately (a fig for high regard and perfect esteem) your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's, ay, and Miss Fauquier's

Most devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

Mem. The letter to myself when I shall be fifty is not finished. Till that is perfect, Lady Harcourt will not be.

1761. TO THE EARL OF ORFORD.[1]

My Dear Lord, *Strawberry Hill, Oct.* 5, 1778.

Your Lordship is very good in thanking me for what I could not claim any thanks, as in complying with your request, and assisting you to settle your affairs, according to my Father's Will, was not only my duty, but to promote your service and benefit, to re-establish the affairs of my family, and to conform myself to the views of the excellent man, the glory of human nature, who made us all what we

[1] Written in answer to the following letter, from his nephew. Now first published

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Sir, *Eriswell, Oct.* 1, 1778.

I write one line to thank you for your ready concurrence in the measures I am now pursuing to settle the affairs of the family, and to satisfy Sir Robert Walpole's creditors; and beg leave to trouble you to make my compliments, and to return my thanks also to Sir Edward.

If you have a mind to revisit your Penates again, and to see the alterations I am making in both fronts (I will not call them improvements), I shall be extremely glad to have your company at Houghton, on Monday fortnight, the 19th of October, where I purpose staying a week.

I am, Sir, with great regard,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

—Cunningham. Orford.

are, has been constantly one of the principal objects of my whole life. If my labours and wishes have been crowned with small success, it has been owing to my own inability in the first place, and next to tenderness, and to the dirt and roguery of wretches below my notice. For your Lordship, I may presume to say, I have spared no thought, industry, solicitude, application, or even health, when I had the care of your affairs. What I did, and could have done, and should have done, if you had not thought fit to prefer a most conceited and worthless fellow, I can demonstrate by reams of paper, that may, one day or other, prove what I say; and which, if I have not yet done, it proceeds from the same tenderness that I have ever had for your Lordship's tranquillity and repose. To acquiesce afterwards in the arrangement you have proposed to me, is small merit indeed. My honour is much dearer to me than fortune, and to contribute to your Lordship's enjoying your fortune with credit and satisfaction, is a point I would have purchased with far greater compliances; for, my Lord, as I flatter myself that I am not thought an interested man, so all who know me know, that to see the lustre of my family restored to the consideration to which it was raised by Sir Robert Walpole, shining in you, and transmitted to his and your descendants, was the only ambition that ever actuated me. No personal advantage entered into those views; and if I say thus much of myself with truth, I owe still greater justice to my brother, who has many more virtues than I can pretend to, and is as incapable of forming any mean and selfish wishes as any man upon earth. We are both old men now, and without sons to inspire us with future visions. We wish to leave your Lordship in as happy and respectable situation as you were born to, and we have both given you all the proof in our power, by acquiescing in your proposal immediately.

For me, my Lord, I should with pleasure accept the honour of waiting on you at Houghton at the time you mention, if my lameness and threats of the gout did not forbid my taking so long a journey at this time of the year. At sixty-one, it would not become me to talk of another year: perhaps I may never go to Houghton again, till I go thither for ever; but without affectation of philosophy, even the path to that journey will be sweetened to me, if I leave Houghton the flourishing monument of one of the best Ministers that ever blest this once flourishing country.

I am, my dear Lord,

Yours most affectionately,

Hor. Walpole.

1762. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1778.

As you are so earnest for news, I am concerned when I have not a paragraph to send you. It looks as if distance augmented your apprehensions; for, I assure you, at home we have lost almost all curiosity. Though the two fleets have been so long at sea, and though, before their last *sortie*, one heard nothing but *What news of the fleets?* of late there has been scarcely any inquiry; and so the French one is returned to Brest, and ours is coming home.[1] Admiral Keppel is very unlucky in having missed them, for they had not above twenty-five ships. Letters from Paris say that their camps, too, are to break up at the end of this month: but we do not intend to be the dupes of that *finesse*, if it is one, but shall remain on our guard. One must hope that winter will produce some negotiation; and that, peace. Indeed, as war is not declared, I conclude there is always some treating on the anvil; and, should it end well, at least this age will have made a step towards humanity, in omitting the ceremonial of proclamation, which seems to make it easier to cease being at war. But I am rather making out a proxy for a letter than sending you news. But, you see, even armies of hundred thousands in Germany can execute as little as we; and you must remember what the Grand Condé, or the great Prince of Orange,—I forget which,—said, that unmarried girls imagine husbands are always on duty, unmilitary men that soldiers are always fighting. One of the Duke of Marlborough's Generals dining with the Lord Mayor, an Alderman who sat next to him said, "Sir, yours must be a very laborious profession."—"No," replied the General, "we fight about four hours in the morning, and two or three after dinner, and then we have all the rest of the day to ourselves."

The King has been visiting camps,—and so has Sir William Howe, who, one should think, had had enough of them; and who, one should think too, had not achieved such exploits as should make him fond of parading himself about, or expect many hosannahs. To have taken one town, and retreated from two, is not very glorious in military arithmetic; and to have marched twice to Washington,

[1] After a fruitless search of two months for the enemy, Admiral Keppel returned with his fleet on the 26th of October to Portsmouth.—Wright.

and returned without attacking him, is no addition to the sum total.

Did I tell you that Mrs. Anne Pitt is returned, and acts great grief for her brother? I suppose she was the dupe of the farce acted by the two Houses and the Court, and had not heard that none of them carried on the pantomime even to his burial. Her nephew[1] gave a little into that mummery even to me; forgetting how much I must remember of his aversion to his uncle. Lord Chatham was a meteor, and a glorious one; people discovered that he was not a genuine luminary, and yet everybody in mimickry has been an *ignis fatuus* about him. Why not allow his magnificent enterprises and good fortune, and confess his defects; instead of being bombast in his praises, and at the same time discover that the amplification is insincere? A Minister who inspires great actions must be a great Minister; and Lord Chatham will always appear so,—by comparison with his predecessors and successors. He retrieved our affairs when ruined by a most incapable Administration; and we are fallen into a worse state since he was removed. Therefore, I doubt, posterity will allow more to his merit, than it is the present fashion to accord to it. Our historians have of late been fond of decrying Queen Elizabeth, in order if possible to raise the Stuarts: but great actions surmount foibles; and folly and guilt would always remain folly and guilt, though there had never been a great man or woman in the world. Our modern tragedies, hundreds of them do not contain a good line; nor are they a jot the better, because Shakspeare, who was superior to all mankind, wrote some whole plays that are as bad as any of our present writers.

I shall be very glad to see your nephew, and talk of you with him; which will be more satisfactory than questioning accidental travellers.

1763. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[2]

Arlington Street, Oct. 9, 1778.

Though I received so very kind a letter from your Lordship this morning, I should have been too modest to answer it, if Lady Laura had not told me last night of Lady Harcourt's obliging commands to her to make me escort her. I should gladly obey that

[1] Mr. Thomas Pitt.—Walpole. [2] Now first published.—Cunningham.

and your Lordship's friendly hint, were it in my power; but I am come to town this morning on disagreeable business with my brother, which will cost me some hundreds of pounds, a clerk in our joint office having chosen to dispose of some money entrusted to him *à la Maccaroni;* and it will tax my time for some days, as well as my purse. But you shall hear no more of it, for I do not take the loss of money enough to heart to draw on my friends for their pity. If I could wait on you at Nuneham, you would not find I have much occasion for consolation.

You do not think, I trust, my dear Lord, that I took the opportunity of your asking for my fourth volume, to thrust another old thing upon you. Lady Harcourt ordered me to send her the Tragedy, and I suppose I forgot to say so. All I have to say of the play is, that Mr. Mason could write a much better, if he would. I can prove what I say, for with the alteration of a few words, and with the addition of a few lines, he made my tragedy fit for the stage, if the rest of it is so. It was one of the most masterly feats ever performed, but I need not do *him* justice to your Lordship. I only mention it that you may not hesitate to set him to work on any little corrections that Lady Harcourt's Poems may want, the faults of which are evidence of the facility with which she writes. Your Lordship is so tender of her honour, that I see you promote her bashfulness instead of giving her courage; but I hope Mr. Mason's judgment will encourage you both; he is no flatterer, I will swear, and when you have the imprimatur of Apollo's own Licenser of the Press, shall I not flatter myself that my office of Printer to Nuneham will no longer be a sinecure?

Lady Laura will give your Lordship an account of a fête I gave her and my other nieces last night. Strawberry really looked very pretty, though neither the prospect nor the painted glass had their share; but forgive me if I say that my nieces supplied those deficiencies. Lady Laura I doubt will miss the prospect still less when she comes from Nuneham. The Duchess is charmed with your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's goodness to her daughters, which you find I was eager to trumpet, for after the very agreeable days I passed at Nuneham myself, it was natural to wish that my niece should be as happy; so your Lordship should be upon your guard, and not to be too indulgent to me, since I cannot help on all occasions being

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

1764. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

My Dear Lord:

I have hunted in vain at Strawberry for the Treillage paper, and cannot find it; I must have lent it to somebody that has forgotten it as well as I. I am vexed, though I hope the bower will not suffer by it, and that it will give jealousy to Queen Eleanor still, or to King Eleanor.

1765. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

I trust I need not say how happy and honoured I am whenever your Lordship is so good as to give me any commands. I must then be as unhappy when I cannot obey them immediately. I have kept your servant while I hunted for the Treillage paper, but I cannot find it. I flatter myself I carried it to Strawberry, whither I go to-morrow and shall search for it—but I fear! It had laid here in an empty room two years. I have an imperfect notion of having lent a bit or the whole piece to somebody, whom I cannot recollect certainly, but think it was Lady Aylesbury, whom I will ask about it. In short, your Lordship may depend upon my recovering it if possible. I only know it was ill done, for the roses were not interlaced among the *batons*, but seemed tacked against them, which had I had it executed here, I intended should be corrected; however, I shall be exceedingly vexed if I do not find the original.

Your Lordship's most devoted,
H. Walpole.

1766. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Saturday morning.

It is so impossible for me, my dear Lord, to know what I shall have it in my power to do on Friday, that I believe the most respectful to your Lordship, which I certainly always mean to be, is to excuse myself for Friday next, though waiting on you and

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

Lady Harcourt would be the most agreeable. The case is that I have been going to Ampthill these three days, but have been delayed by the danger of the poor Bishop of Exeter, of whom I every minute expect the worst news.* Should I fortunately hear anything good, I shall go on Monday to Lord Ossory's for a week, as I have promised. If the Bishop should linger, his death may make it improper for me to dine abroad on Friday. Forgive my troubling your Lordship with so many circumstances, since it proves how much I wish to be always at your command, and how much I am afraid of laying you [under] any difficulty by my unavoidable uncertainty. If I am at liberty, I hope at least Lady Harcourt will allow me to pay my duty to her in the evening.

Your Lordship's most devoted,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1767. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

I RETURN your Lordship Mrs. Macaulay's letter with many thanks. I need not say how much I agree with her in most topics; but I smiled at her account of the provisions in France, and their *bad* cookery.

I accept always with great pleasure your Lordship's invitations; and certainly have no exceptions to the company specified. Though you are so very good as to name them, I think I may trust to never meeting at Harcourt House any body that would be very disagreeable to me, much less that could balance the honour and pleasure of waiting on your Lordship and Lady Harcourt. I remember that Lady Townshend, in 1746, said she did not dare to dine any where, for fear of meeting with Rebel pies. Thank God! we are in no danger *now* of such dishes. Indeed your Lordship and I have been more likely to be the ingredients than the guests at such banquets! Poor Lord Pigot! He *has dined* with a Scotchman!

H. W.

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

* See Letter No. 1698, page 18 of this volume.

1768. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 11, 1778.

A THOUSAND thanks for the trouble you have given yourself, and the information you have sent me;[1] it fully satisfies me, at least till my next visit to Nuneham. I own there is an idea in the play you describe, which, had it come into my hand, I should certainly have adopted;—the mother's intention of meeting her own husband and not her son. However as you have, by a *coup de baguette*, obviated the shocking part, I trouble myself no farther. I never had any difficulty of adopting your corrections, but because my original view was to paint the height of repentance for real guilt; whereas any palliative admits a degree of weakness in the Countess, and makes her rather superstitious or delicate, than penitent upon reason. But however, as I am tired of the subject, I will not tire you upon it. If ever the play is acted, it must be with your improvements, which I will print with it. So I will whether it is acted or not; for such marks of your genius should not be lost, though you want not other proofs; and it will please me to have furnished you with the materials. I grow tired to death of my own things, and hate to talk of them.

Lady Laura, who carries this, will tell you how many accidents prevent my obeying Lord and Lady Harcourt, and accompanying her. I have lost near 700*l.* by a clerk, and I am on Tuesday to sign a family compact with my nephew, by which, some time or other, I shall get the fortune my father left me, which I never expected; so the balance of events is in my favour, and then the deuce is in it if I am to be pitied.

[1] MASON TO WALPOLE.[2]

Nuneham, Oct. 7, 1778.

I SEND you, with this, a short account of an old play in Lord Harcourt's library, with an extract from it, which will show you how similar the story is to your 'Mysterious Mother,' or rather to my alteration of it. I look upon it as a curious discovery, but which affects your tragedy no more than Aaron Hill's 'Fair Inconstant,' or his 'Athelwold' (for he wrote two on the same subject) does my 'Elfrida.'

W. MASON.

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[2] Now first published. The original was sold at Mr. Hodges's sale at Puttick and Simpson's, in December, 1848, for 16*s.* The old play referred to by Mason is 'The Fatal Discovery; or, Love in Ruins," 1698. 4to. Acted at Drury Lane in 1698.—Author unknown.—CUNNINGHAM.

Lady Laura will describe to you a most brilliant fête that I gave her and her sisters and cousins last Thursday. People may say what they will, but splendid as it was, I am not of opinion that this *festival of nieces* was absolutely the most charming show that ever was seen. I believe the entertainment given by the Queen of the Amazons to the King of Mauritania in the Castle of Ice, and the ball made for the Princess of Persia by the Duke of Sparta in the Saloon of Roses were both of them more delightful, especially as the contrast of the sable Africans with the shining whiteness of the Thracian heroines, and the opposition between the nudity of the Lacedæmonian generals and the innumerable folds of linen in the drapery of the Persian ladies, must have been more singular than all the marvels in the Castle of Strawberry last Thursday. To be sure, the illumination of the Gallery surpassed the Palace of the Sun; and when its fretted ceiling, which you know is richer than the roof of Paradise, opened for the descent of Mrs. Clive in the full moon, nothing could be more striking. The Circular Drawing-room was worthy of the presence of Queen Bess, as many of the old ladies, who remember her, affirmed; and the high altar in the Tribune was fitter for a Protestant king's hearing mass than the chapel at Lord Petre's. The tapestry bed in the Great Chamber looked gorgeous (though it had not an escutcheon of pretence like the Duchess of Chandos's while her father and brother are living) and was ready strewed with roses for a hymeneal; but alas! there was the misfortune of the solemnity!

Though my nieces looked as well as the Houris, notwithstanding I was disappointed of the house of North to set them off, and though I had sent out one hundred and thirty cards, in this region there are no swains who are under my own almost climacteric. I had three Jews of Abraham's standing, and seven Sarahs who still talk of the second Temple. The rest of the company were dowagers and maidens, with silver beards down to their girdles; Henry and Frances, whose doves have long done laying; the curate of the parish; Briscoe, the second-hand silversmith; and Lady Greenwich in a riding-dress, for she came on her own broom. You may perhaps think that some of the company were not quite of dignity adequate to such a high festival, but they were just the persons made the most happy by being invited: and as the haughtiest peers stoop to be civil to shopkeepers before an election, I did not see why I should not do, out of good nature, what the proudest so often do out of interest. I do not mention two

ancient Generals, because they have not been beaten out of America into red ribbands; nor a Judge Perryn, who had solicited me to invite his daughters, and brought them on my sending a very civil card, and yet did not so much as write an answer or thank me —but I really believe it was from mere stupidity. If I could grudge your staying at Nuneham, I should regret your not being here in such noble weather. Come, however, as soon as you can and stay as long.

By the rise of the Stocks, and the wonderful hide-and-seek of the fleets, I suspect some treaty is brewing: it cannot be so scandalous but it will go down; and therefore it cannot be worse than the Nation deserves. If anything prevents it, it will be the declaration of the Spanish Ambassador, that King Carlos will never acknowledge the Independence of America till King George does, which I suppose the latter will not do, if even the King of Monomatapa or the King of Mechlemberg will encourage him to go on. Besides it is a heavenly sight to see soldiers, and not see an enemy! and a more heavenly sight, to see a puppet-show, and to lock up one's son, who is of an age to enjoy one!—and yet what command of one's passions to put off a review for a christening!—what pity gazettes-extraordinary were not in fashion, when two shillings were issued out of the Exchequer to Jack of Reading, for getting on the table and making the King sport. This was in the reign of Edward II., and is only recorded in a *computus* still extant. Adieu.

1769. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Oct. 14, 1778.

I THINK you take in no newspapers, nor I believe condescend to read any more modern than the *Paris à la Main* at the time of the *Ligue;* consequently you have not seen a new scandal on my father, which you will not wonder offends me. You cannot be interested in his defence; but, as it comprehends some very curious anecdotes, you will not grude my indulging myself to a friend in vindicating a name so dear to me.

In the accounts of Lady Chesterfield's death and fortune, it is said that the late King, at the instigation of Sir Robert Walpole, burnt his father's Will which contained a large legacy to that, his supposed, daughter,—and I believe his real one; for she was very like him, as her brother, General Schulembourg, is, in black, to the late King.

The fact of suppressing the Will is indubitably true; the instigator most false, as I can demonstrate thus:—

When the news arrived of the death of George the First, my father carried the account from Lord Townshend to the then Prince of Wales. One of the first acts of royalty is for the new monarch to make a speech to the Privy Council. Sir Robert asked the King who he would please to have draw the Speech, which was, in fact, asking who was to be Prime Minister; to which his Majesty replied, Sir Spencer Compton. It is a wonderful anecdote, and but little known, that the new Premier, a very dull man, could not draw the Speech, and the person to whom he applied was the deposed Premier. The Queen, who favoured my father, observed how unfit a man was for successor, who was reduced to beg assistance of his predecessor. The Council met as soon as possible, the next morning at latest. There Archbishop Wake, with whom one copy of the Will had been deposited, (as another was, I think, with the Duke of Wolfenbuttel, who had a pension for sacrificing it, which, *I know*, the late Duke of Newcastle transacted), advanced, and delivered the Will to the King, who put it into his pocket, and went out of Council without opening it, the Archbishop not having courage or presence of mind to desire it to be read, as he ought to have done.

These circumstances, which I solemnly assure you are strictly true, prove that my father neither advised, nor was consulted; nor is it credible that the King in one night's time should have passed from the intention of disgracing him, to make him his bosom confidant on so delicate an affair.

I was once talking to the late Lady Suffolk, the former mistress, on that extraordinary event. She said, "I cannot justify the deed to the legatees; but towards his father, the late King was justifiable, for George the First had burnt two Wills made in favour of George the Second." I suppose they were the testaments of the Duke and Duchess of Zell, parents of George the First's wife, whose treatment of her they always resented.[1]

I said, *I know* the transactions of the Duke of Newcastle. The late Lord Waldegrave showed me a letter from that Duke to the first Earl of Waldegrave, then ambassador at Paris, with directions about that transaction, or, at least, about payment of the pension, I forget which. I have somewhere, but cannot turn to it now, a memorandum of that affair, and who the Prince was, whom I may mistake in

[1] Compare Walpole's "Reminiscences,' chap. vi. in vol. i. p. cxx.—Cunningham.

calling Duke of Wolfenbuttel. There was a third copy of the Will, I likewise forget with whom deposited. The Newspaper says, (which is true,) that Lord Chesterfield filed a bill in Chancery against the late King to oblige him to produce the Will, and was silenced, I think, by payment of twenty thousand pounds. There was another legacy to his own daughter the Queen of Prussia, which has at times been, and, I believe, is still claimed by the King of Prussia.

Do not mention any part of this story; but it is worth preserving, as I am sure you are satisfied with my scrupulous veracity. It may perhaps be authenticated hereafter by collateral evidence that may come out. If ever true history does come to light, my father's character will have just honour paid to it. Lord Chesterfield, one of his sharpest enemies, has not, with all his prejudices, left a very unfavourable account of him, and it would alone be raised by a comparison of their two characters. Think of one who calls Sir Robert the corrupter of youth, leaving a system of education to poison them from their nursery! Chesterfield, Pulteney, and Bolingbroke were the saints that reviled my father! I beg your pardon, but you will allow me to open my heart to you when it is full. Yours ever.

1770. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Oct. 23, 1778.

* * * * * * Having thus told you all I know, I shall add a few words, to say I conclude you have known as much, by my not having heard from you. Should the Post-Office or Secretary's Office set their wits at work to bring to light all the intelligence contained under the above hiatus, I am confident they will discover nothing, though it gives an exact description of all they have been about themselves.

My personal history is very short. I have had an assembly and the rheumatism—and am buying a house—and it rains—and I shall plant the roses against my treillage to-morrow. Thus you know what I have done, suffered, am doing, and shall do. Let me know as much of you, in quantity, not in quality. Introductions to, and conclusions of, letters are as much out of fashion, as *to*, *at*, &c., on letters. This sublime age reduces everything to its quintessence: all periphrases and expletives are so much in disuse, that I suppose soon the only way of making love will be to say "Lie down."

Luckily, the lawyers will not part with any synonymous words, and will, consequently, preserve the redundancies of our language, —*Dixi.*

1771. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Oct. 26, 1778.

I HAVE finished the Life of Mr. Baker, will have it transcribed, and send it to you. I have omitted several little particulars that are in your notes, for two reasons: one, because so much is said in the 'Biographia;' and the other, because I have rather drawn a character of him, than meant a circumstantial life. In the justice I have done to him, I trust I shall have pleased you. I have much greater doubt of that effect in what I have said of his principles and party. It is odd, perhaps, to have made use of the life of a high churchman for expatiating on my own very opposite principles; but it gave me so fair an opportunity of discussing those points, that I very naturally embraced it. I have done due honour to his immaculate conscience, but have not spared the cause in which he fell,— or rather rose; for the ruin of his fortune was the triumph of his virtue.

As you know I do not love the press, you may be sure I have no thoughts of printing this Life at present; nay, I beg you will not only not communicate it, but take care it never should be printed without my consent. I have written what presented itself; I should perhaps choose to soften several passages; and I trust it to you for your own satisfaction, not as a finished thing, or as I am determined it should remain.

Another favour I beg of you is to criticise it as largely and severely as you please. You have a right so to do, as it is built with your own materials; nay, you have a right to scold if I have, nay, since I have, employed them so differently from your intention. All my excuse is, that you communicated them to one who did not deceive you, and who you was pretty sure would make nearly the use of them that he has made. Was not you? did not you suspect a little that I could not even write a Life of Mr. Baker without talking Whiggism! Well, if I have ill-treated the cause, I am sure I have exalted the martyr. I have thrown new light on his virtue from his notes on the Gazettes, and you will admire him more, though you may love me less, for my chemistry. I should be truly sorry if I did lose a

scruple of your friendship. You have ever been as candid to me as Mr. Baker was to his antagonists, and our friendship is another proof that men of the most opposite principles can agree in everything else, and not quarrel about them.

As my manuscript contains above twenty pages of my writing on larger paper than this, you cannot receive it speedily. However, I have performed my promise, and I hope you will not be totally discontent, though I am not satisfied with myself. I have executed it by snatches and by long interruptions; and not having been eager about it, I find I wanted that ardour to inspire me; another proof of what I told you, that my small talent is waning, and wants provocatives. It shall be a warning to me. Adieu!

1772. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Oct. 30, 1778.

Pray allow that I am a miracle of attention, when I have the courage to begin a letter that is, I know, to contain little or nothing, and which is the quintessence of two very long Gazettes. We had been amused with a notion that Lord Howe was blocking up M. D'Estaing in Boston, and would certainly take him and his whole fleet. Lest we should build too much on that idea, Lord Howe himself arrived on Monday, having taken nothing—but his leave. Being modest, he owns that he had no mind to encounter the French squadron. A violent storm solved his difficulties, and dispersed both fleets. The Americans, deprived of their allies, quitted Rhode Island; and then Sir Harry Clinton raised a contribution of ten thousand sheep and some oxen, which intimates a little want of provisions. However, these escapes have raised our spirits so much, that we are going to send twelve thousand men more to America, where they may banquet on mutton. Still, as it is good to have two strings to our bow, the Governor Johnstone is returned;[1]

[1] Governor Johnstone had been charged by the Congress with an attempt to corrupt and bribe General Reed with the sum of ten thousand pounds and a public situation in the colonies; to which offer the General is said to have answered, "that he was not worth purchasing, but, such as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it." In consequence of this, the Congress interdicted all intercourse and correspondence with the Commissioners while Governor Johnstone continued one of them. He therefore resigned, and returned to England. In a letter to George Selwyn, of the 6th of November, Mr. Charles Townshend says, "Governor Johnstone is as mad as a bull. He foams at the mouth, and swears that he will impeach Lord Howe and Sir William for not reducing America. Wedderburn says

the other two Commissioners remain to make peace, to which we are told the Americans are disposed; a proof of which is our sending another army thither.

Admiral Keppel is returned to Portsmouth, and the Brest squadron is again at sea; taking it by turns to take an airing.

One advantage we certainly have, having taken to the value of two millions in prizes; on the strength of which we shall fling away above double that sum. But we never proposed to be gainers by the war: we had nothing to do, and so we played against ourselves.

The Duke of Queensberry [Gay's Duke] is dead, at fourscore; and leaves a great estate to Lord March, the new Duke. ['*old* Q.'] There is a much more melancholy loss, the death of Lord Lincoln. He was sent abroad at the last gasp, and died two posts from Calais. You know he married one of my cousins, a daughter of Lord Hertford. She is a very pretty, sensible, amiable young woman, and passionately fond of him. She returned last night with the body.

I came to town on Monday for a day or two, and have been caught by the gout in my foot; but it is very slight, and with very little pain, so that I hope it will be of short duration. It is amazing what the bootikins have done for me by diminishing the mass of gout. I have had no fit for nearly two years, and the three last were very inconsiderable. As I have worn the bootikins constantly every night ever since my great fit, it is demonstration how serviceable they are to me at least.

Mrs. Anne Pitt, I hear, is in a very wild way, and they think must be confined. She is not the only one I know that ought to be, —but I hold my peace. Indeed, in this country it would be partiality to shut up only one or two here and there.

I make no excuse for being so short. I am tired of lamenting; and still live, I doubt, to see the completion of all the ruin I have foreseen,—and then one has lived too long!

he talks in a very manly style; and he is much caressed by Ministers, whom he has abused in so coarse a style to the Americans: you may be sure he caresses them in his turn. He puts me in mind of a character of King James I., given by an old Scotch Lord at his accession: 'Ken you an ape? If I'se hold him, he will bite you; if you hold him, he will bite me.'"—*Selwyn Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 347.—Wright.

1773. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, Nov. 4, 1778.

You will see by my secretary's hand, that I am not able to write myself; indeed, I am in bed with the gout in six places, like Daniel in the den; but, as the lions are slumbering round me, and leave me a moment of respite, I employ it to give you one. You have misunderstood me, dear Sir: I have not said a word that will lower Mr. Baker's character; on the contrary, I think he will come out brighter from my ordeal. In truth, as I have drawn out his life from your papers, it is a kind of political epic, in which his conscience is the hero that always triumphs over his interest upon the most opposite occasions. Shall you dislike your saint in this light? I had transcribed about half when I fell ill last week. If the gout does not seize my right hand, I shall probably have full leisure to finish it during my recovery, but shall certainly not be able to send it to you by Mr. Lort.

Your promise fully satisfies me. My life can never extend to twenty years.[1] Any one that saw me this moment would not take me for a Methuselah. I have not strength to dictate more now, except to add, that if Mr. Nichols has seen my narrative about Chatterton, it can only be my letter to Mr. Barrett, of which you have a copy; the larger one has not yet been out of my own house. Yours most sincerely.

1774. TO LADY BROWNE.[2]

Arlington Street, Nov. 5, 1778.

Your Ladyship is exceedingly kind and charitable, and the least I can do in return is to do all I can—dictate a letter to you. I have not been out of bed longer than it was necessary to have it made, once a day, since last Thursday. The gout is in both my feet, both my knees, and in my left hand and elbow. Had I a mind to brag, I

[1] Mr. Cole had informed Walpole that his Collections were not to be opened until twenty years after his death.—Wright.

[2] Frances Sheldon, first married to Henry Fermor, Esq., of Tusmore, and afterwards to Sir George Browne (see Walpole's Works, vol. iv. p. 392). She must not be confounded with Walpole's "merry Catholic Lady Brown"—"the fair widow Brown," who died in 1782.—Cunningham.

could boast of a little rheumatism too, but I scorn to set value on such a trifle; nay, I will own that I have felt little acute pain. My chief propensity to exaggeration would be on the miserable nights I have passed; and yet whatever I should say would not be beyond what I thought I suffered. I have been constantly as broad awake as any Mrs. Candour that is always gaping for scandal, except when I have taken opiates, and then my dreams have been as extravagant as all Mrs. Candour adds to what she hears. In short, Madam, not to tire you with more details, though you have ordered them, I am so weak that I am able to see nobody at all, and when I shall be recovered enough to take possession of this new lease, as it is called, the mansion, I believe, will be so shattered that it won't be worth repairs. Is it not very foolish, then, to be literally buying a new house? Is it not verifying Pope's line, when I choose a pretty situation

> But just to look about us, and to die?

I am sorry Lady Jane's lot is fallen in Westphalia, where so great a hog is lord of the manor. He is like the dragon of Wantley,

> And houses and churches
> To him are geese and turkeys;

so I don't wonder that he has gobbled her two cows.

Lady Blandford is delightful in congratulating me upon having the gout in town, and staying in the country herself. Nay, she is very insolent in presuming to be the only person invulnerable. If I could wish her any harm, it should be that she might feel for one quarter of an hour a taste of the mortifications that I suffered from eleven last night till four this morning, and I am sure she would never dare to have a spark of courage again. I can only wish her in Grosvenor-square, where she would run no risks. Her reputation for obstinacy is so well established, that she might take advice from her true friends for a twelvemonth, before we should believe her own ears. However, as everybody has some weak part, I know she will do for others more than for herself; and therefore, pray, Madam, tell her, that I am sure it is bad for your Ladyship to stay in the country at this time of year, and that reason I am sure will bring you both. I really must rest.

1775. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Nov. 16, 1778.

I THINK I luckily wrote to you just as I was seized with the gout and told you so. I am sure I have not been able to write since, for I am confined to my bed; and have been above this fortnight with the gout in every hand, elbow, knee, and foot belonging to me, and not one of the eight is yet recovered. This is so terrible a state to suffer, and so tiresome to hear from anybody else, that I shall say as little upon it as possible. There is no danger in it: in every other light it is deplorable.

This confinement has cost you no news but the loss of Dominica;[1] and you saw as much of that in the newspaper, at least, as I could tell you. I have this moment received yours of the 27th of last month, in which you again petition for good news, that you may silence the impertinent buzzes in your part of the world; but in truth I don't know how you will stop their throats, but by the quantity and richness of the captures made from the French. The King's Speech, I doubt, must have great recourse to the same anodyne. Nothing of consequence has been done anywhere, by fleets or armies; and the notion is, that our own returned commanders are likely to be warmer with one another, than they have been with the enemy: but, indeed, I believe reports of what is to come still less than what is past, neither of which have I for some time seen come to anything:—then it is not difficult to foresee the consequence.

I am surprised at the Hibernian family you mention being arrived at Florence so soon: you are very welcome to show them as many civilities as you please, and set them down to my account; but do not receive everything they say of me as coming from the heart. They know your partiality to me, and they mean to pass their time everywhere as agreeably as they can. For the other lady,[2] and her daughter Chance, be doubly upon your guard against the mother. There is nothing so black of which she is not capable. Her gallantries are the whitest specks about her.

[1] The island of Dominica was taken on the 7th of September, by the Marquis de Bouille, Governor-General of Martinico.—WRIGHT.

[2] Elizabeth Drax, Countess-Dowager of Berkeley, afterwards married to Robert Nugent, Esq., since created Earl of Clare. During her latter marriage she had two daughters, the younger of whom Mr. Nugent disavowed for his. The elder was married to the second Earl Temple.—WALPOLE.

I have heard nothing of your nephew's arrival; but shall be very impatient when he does come to see him, as soon as I can see anybody. I shall long to hear his account of you, and good accounts of you; at least, I shall not hear that you are little more than a mummy, as I am. Adieu!

1776. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Nov. 27, 1778.

In my present situation, lying on a couch in my bedchamber, with not a single limb free but my left hand, I certainly did not expect any singular pleasure to-day; and yet I had the great and unexpected one of seeing your nephew, who, though another, is a true Sir Horace. He had called here a few days ago, when I was able to see scarcely anybody; and, not being expected, he was not admitted. I was heartily chagrined, and did not know whither to send to him. He was so kind as to come again to-day, when you may be sure he was not refused. As I can only dictate, I must retrench a thousand things I would say; but one word will paint my contentment with him. He loves you as much as he would have loved his father, if he had known him as well. Indeed, it is the same thing: as I told him, there were two you's or two he's. Your nephew says he would not but visit you every year for the world, which you may be sure I did not discourage; though I must naturally wish just the reverse, *i. e.* that you should visit him, at least for once. He tells me you are very plump and portly, and in most admirable health. Poor young man! he had a little gout in one foot, and I presented but a sad perspective to him. But I begged him not to bring the gout into his stomach, by being persuaded to keep it out by strong wines. Though I have been so often afflicted by severe fits for these twenty years, I never had it but one half hour in my head, and never once in my stomach. In this fit, though I kept my bed within three days of a month, perspired immoderately and almost constantly, yet I drank nothing but cold water the whole time; and every morning as soon as I wake, have my face and neck washed with cold water. No fit ever came so rapidly and regularly, nor went off more kindly—thanks to the bootikins, and to cold water and air; which two last, I am persuaded by long experience, will never hurt *me*, though very likely my system would kill a Hercules, who all his life kept up a fiery furnace in his

stomach. For your nephew, he seems to have acquired the only thing he wanted, and which was very excusable to want at his age, —prudence. And he feels it still more on your account than his own.

I beg the nation's, but not your pardon, for indulging myself in giving the precedence to your nephew.—Now for the other.

Our Parliament opened yesterday. The Speech did not display very promising prospects, but the debates and events in neither House were remarkable: prodigious bickerings were expected between generals, admirals, commissioners, and Ministers; but some of the points in contestation were alone touched, and nothing probed, though probably only deferred.

It is said and believed, that Sir Harry Clinton had embarked a body of troops for our West Indian Islands, but has disembarked them again; so the merchants concerned in those islands are in the highest alarms. Spain, I doubt, grows less and less to be depended upon; and the French party in Holland have carried some strong questions against our seizure of their ships, though we have offered reasonable indemnification. In short, I have neither good news nor good prognostics to send you. All these things are public; and secrets I should not utter even to you at this distance, if I knew any.

You shall hear again as soon as I am able to write, or sooner if there is anything material to send you. Your nephew will help me out; though in the hurry of a fresh arrival, and with his attendance on Parliament,[1] you cannot justly expect him to be very punctual at first, till he is got *en train*: however, I am sure his heart will not let him be remiss. Adieu!

1777. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Dec. 18, 1778.

Having so many lonely vacant hours (if pain leaves vacancy), I should seem unpardonable in having left such a chasm in our correspondence, when I know you are extremely impatient for news. Solitary hours, to be sure, I have had innumerable, even in my best intervals; for fashion has pushed the day so far into the night, that I have been forced to conform my sick regularity a little to the watches of the town, and dine later than I choose, or dine in public:

[1] Sir Horace Mann the younger was member for Maidstone.—Cunningham.

for nobody will make me a morning's visit before two in the afternoon, nor leave me to go home to dress for dinner before four. They come not again till eight or nine at night, when they would keep me out of bed till twelve, if I would let them.

But I have had more grievous reasons for not writing; though free from pain for this week, I have not yet at all recovered the use of my right hand. But I have had a more serious and more dangerous complaint, and the consequence of my gout; such a weakness in my breast, that an inflammation on it was apprehended, and I was absolutely forbidden to see company, or even speak, which I must do to dictate. This codicil to my gout, I confess, was owing to this my second childhood; in short, my spirits ran away with me, and I talked without ceasing. Even a child is cunning enough to make excuses: mine was, that I could have gone about the town for three days without speaking three words, for I might not have met with three persons to whom I wished to speak; but in my own room, where I see nobody but those I choose to see, and many friends whom I had not seen for six months, one must have the continent tongue of Lord Abercorn[1] to be silent. Well! I am recovered of that danger, and am recovering of all the rest; and you shall now hear no more of me, who am not politics, which are what you want to know.

Of them I know not what to write. The Parliament is unshaken, though it has had rough concussions. The rash proclamation in America alarmed much, and I fear will have bitter consequences: but all is swallowed up by the new court-martial on Admiral Keppel; as rash an act in its kind, and the deed, it is said, of that black man Sir Hugh Palliser alone. Its consequences may be many, various, and fatal; but I neither love to foresee, nor to spread misfortunes of my country, when my letter must pass through the ordeal of as many hostile post-houses as formerly gallant ladies passed over burning plough-shares,—let us talk rather of *galant* ladies—but no, I hate scandal; and, besides, our greatest dames are no longer gallant, but errant street-walkers, and I have never promised to send you the register of Doctors' Commons: our newswriters are the proper secretaries of that tribunal, and can scarcely outstrip the truth.

What I have long apprehended is on the point of conclusion, the

[1] James Hamilton, eighth Earl of Abercorn, remarkable for his taciturnity.—WALPOLE.

sale of the pictures at Houghton. The mad master has sent his final demand of forty-five thousand pounds for them to the Empress of Russia, at the same time that he has been what he calls improving the outside of the house; *basta!* Thus end all my visions about Houghton, which I never will *see*, though I must go thither at last; nor, if I can help it, think of more.

Your old acquaintance, Mr. Worseley,[1] is dead, and in a shocking way to us moderns, though *à la Romaine:* he had such dreadful internal complaints, that he determined to starve himself, and for the four last days tasted exactly nothing.

My newly recovered voice will not permit me to dictate: your nephew and the newspaper can tell you as much more as I could. If I have any judgment, which I doubt, the tragedy is coming rather to the fifth act than to the conclusion. Hitherto the drama has been carried on by relation, or—behind the scenes; now the *dénouement* may be on the stage. Adieu! I am quite tired.

1778. TO LADY BROWNE.

Arlington Street, Dec. 18, 1778.

My not writing with my own hand, to thank your Ladyship for your very obliging letter, is the worst symptom that remains with me, Madam: all pain and swelling are gone; and I hope in a day or two to get a glove even on my right hand, and to walk with help into the next room by the end of next week. I did, I confess, see a great deal too much company too early; and was such an old child as to prattle abundantly, till I was forced to shut myself up for a week and see nobody; but I am quite recovered, and the emptiness of the town will soon preserve me from any excesses.

I am exceedingly glad to hear your Ladyship finds so much benefit from the air. I own I thought you looked ill the last time I had the honour of seeing you; and though I am sorry to hear you talk with so much satisfaction of a country life, I am not selfish enough to wish you to leave Tusmore a day before your health is quite re-established, nor to envy Mr. Fermor so agreeable an addition to his society and charming seat.

Poor Lady Albemarle is indeed very miserable and full of apprehensions; though the incredible zeal of the navy for Admiral

[1] James Worseley, Master of the Board of Works.—Walpole.

Keppel crowns him with glory, and the indignation of mankind, and the execration of Sir Hugh, add to the triumph. Indeed, I still think Lady Albemarle's fears may be well founded: some slur may be *procured* on her son; and his own bad nerves, and worse constitution, may not be able to stand agitation and suspense.

Lady Blandford has had a cold, but I hear is well again, and has generally two tables. She will be a loss indeed to all her friends, and to hundreds more; but she cannot be immortal, nor would be if she could.

The writings are not yet signed, Madam, for my house, but I am in no doubt of having it; yet I shall not think of going into it till the spring, as I cannot *enjoy* this year's gout in it, and will not venture catching a codicil, by going backwards and forwards to it before it is aired.

I know no particular news, but that Lord Bute was thought in great danger yesterday; I have heard nothing of him to-day. I do not know even a match, but of some that are going to be divorced; the fate of one of the latter is to be turned into an exaltation, and is treated by her family and friends in quite a new style, to the discomfit of all prudery. It puts me in mind of Lord Lansdowne's lines in the room in the Tower where my father had been confined,

Some fall so hard, they bound and rise again.

Methinks, however, it is a little hard on Lord George Germaine, that in four months after seeing a Duchess of Dorset, he may see a Lord Middlesex too; for so old the egg is said to be, that is already prepared. If this trade goes on, half the peeresses will have two eldest sons with both fathers alive at the same time. Lady Holdernesse expresses nothing but grief and willingness to receive her daughter[1] again on any terms, which probably will happen; for the daughter has already opened her eyes, is sensible of her utter ruin, and has written to Lord Carmarthen and Madam Cordon, acknowledging her guilt, and begging to be remembered only with pity, which is sufficient to make one pity her.

I would beg pardon for so long a letter, but your Ladyship desired

[1] Amelia D'Arcy, Baroness Conyers, daughter of Robert, fourth Earl of Holdernesse, the patron of Mason. She was born 12 October, 1754, married the Marquis of Carmarthen, 29 Nov., 1773, and succeeded her father in 1778 as Baroness Conyers in her own right. She eloped with Captain John Byron, eldest son of Admiral Byron, and father of the great poet, and in May 1779 was divorced from the Marquis. —Cunningham.

intelligence, and I know a long letter from London is not uncomfortable at Christmas, even in the most comfortable house in the country. Perhaps my own forced idleness has a little contributed to lengthen it; still I hope it implies great readiness to obey your Ladyship's commands, in your most obedient humble servant.

1779. TO LADY BROWNE.[1]

I AM much obliged to your Ladyship, and certainly could not take anything ill that was accident, but I own I never suffered more uneasiness in my life. I was in pain and not well; the heat of the evening, the fatigue of playing so long at whist, and with three persons I had never spoken to in my life, and the lameness of my hand, made me ready to faint, and I went home in a fever, and got no sleep for some hours. But I beg your Ladyship will never name it to Lady Egremont, who was extremely civil and obliging; but I will take care never to be in such a scrape again, which was too much for my weakness. I will certainly call on your Ladyship on Monday—I suppose by half an hour after six.

1780. TO LADY BROWNE.[1]

YOUR Ladyship is exceedingly kind in all your different attentions. I am indeed very low, for these frequent attacks shake my nerves so much, that every fit, great or small, makes them worse; and they come so often, that I have not time to recover; but nobody is to be pitied in comparison to Mrs. Stapleton; nor has anybody deserved misfortune and ill usage so little. I hope she will wrap herself up in her own virtues, and do, what never was so justifiable, think only of herself. I beg, if you see her, your Ladyship will tell her how very high my regard for her is. I hope she has friends in her own family who will know how to value her—the Grenvilles did not deserve her.

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

1781. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.[1]

Arlington Street, Dec. 24, 1778.

It was an additional mortification to my illness, my Lord, that I was not able to thank your Lordship with my own hand for the honour of your letter, and for your goodness in remembering an old man, who must with reason consider himself as forgotten, when he never was of importance, and is now almost useless to himself. Frequent severe fits of the gout have a good deal disabled me from pursuing the trifling studies in which I could pretend to know anything; or at least have given me an indifference, that makes me less ready in answering questions than I may have been formerly; and as my papers are in the country, whither at present I am not able to go, I fear I can give but unsatisfactory replies to your Lordship's queries.

The two very curious pictures of King James and his Queen[2] (I cannot recollect whether the third or fourth of the name, but I know that she was a princess of Sweden or Denmark, and that her arms are on her portrait,) were at the palace at Kensington, and I imagine are there still. I had obtained leave from the Lord Chamberlain to have drawings made of them, and Mr. Wale actually began them for me; but he made such slow progress, and I was so called off from the thought of them by indispositions and other avocations, that they were never finished; and Mr. Wale may, perhaps, still have the beginnings he made.

At the Duke of Devonshire's at Hardwicke, there is a valuable though poorly painted picture of James V. and Mary of Guise, his second queen: it is remarkable from the great resemblance of Mary Queen of Scots to her father; I mean in Lord Morton's picture of her, and in the image of her on her tomb at Westminster, which agree together, and which I take to be the genuine likeness. I have doubts on Lord Burlington's picture, and on Dr. Mead's. The nose in both is thicker, and also fuller at bottom than on the tomb; though it is a little supported by her coins.

[1] David Stewart Erskine, eleventh Earl of Buchan, well known to every reader of Lockhart's 'Life of Scott.' He died in 1829, at the age of eighty-seven.—Cunningham.

[2] The portraits are those of James the Third of Scotland (though commonly called James the Fourth) and his queen, a princess of Denmark. They are now (1857) at Hampton Court, but will be hung in future (it is said) in Holyrood. They are well *photographed* in the great work of Colnaghi and Agnew, illustrative of the Art-Treasures Exhibition at Manchester in 1857.—Cunningham.

There is a much finer portrait—indeed, an excellent head—of the Lady Margaret Douglas at Mr. Carteret's at Hawnes in Bedfordshire (the late Lord Granville's). It is a very shrewd countenance, and at the same time with great goodness of character. Lord Scarborough has a good picture, in the style of Holbein at least, of Queen Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII., and of her second or third husband (for, if I don't mistake, she had three); but, indeed, my Lord, these things are so much out of my memory at present, that I speak with great diffidence. I cannot even recollect anything else to your Lordship's purpose; but I flatter myself, that these imperfect notices will at least be a testimony of my readiness to obey your Lordship's commands, as that I am, with great respect, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient humble servant.

1782. TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, [1778.]

I HAVE gone through your Inquisitor's attack,[1] and am far from being clear that it deserves your giving yourself the trouble of an answer, as neither the detail nor the result affects your argument. So far from it, many of his reproofs are levelled at your having quoted a wrong page; he confessing often that what you have cited is in the author referred to, but not precisely in the individual spot. If St. Peter is attended by a corrector of the press, you will certainly never be admitted where he is a porter. I send you my copy, because I scribbled my remarks. I do not send them with the impertinent presumption of suggesting a hint to you, but to prove I did not grudge the trouble of going through such a book when you desired it, and to show how little struck me as of any weight.

I have set down nothing on your imputed plagiarisms; for, if they are so, no argument that has ever been employed must be used again, even where the passage necessary is applied to a different purpose. An author is not allowed to be master of his own works; but, by Davis's new law, the first person that cites him would be so. You probably looked into Middleton, Dodwell, &c.; had the same

[1] 'An Examination of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. By Henry Edward Davis, B.A., of Baliol College, Oxford.' He was a native of Windsor, and is believed to have received a present from George the Third for this production.— WRIGHT.

reflections on the same circumstances, or conceived them so as to recollect them, without remembering what suggested them. Is this plagiarism? If it is, Davis and such cavillers might go a short step further, and insist that an author should peruse every work antecedently written on every subject at all collateral to his own—not to assist him, but to be sure to avoid every material touched by his predecessors.

I will make but one remark on such divine champions. Davis and his prototypes tell you Middleton, &c., have used the same objections, and they have been *confuted: answering*, in the theologic dictionary, signifying *confuting;* no matter whether there is sense, argument, truth, in the answer or not.

Upon the whole, I think ridicule is the only answer such a work is entitled to. The ablest answer which you can make (which would be the ablest answer that could be made) would never have any authority with the cabal, yet would allow a sort of dignity to the author. His patrons will always maintain that he vanquished you, unless you made him too ridiculous for them to dare to revive his name. You might divert yourself, too, with Alma Mater, the Church, employing a *goujat* to defend the citadel, while the generals repose in their tents. If Irenæus, St. Augustine, &c., did not set apprentices and proselytes to combat Celsus and the adversaries of the new religion —— but early bishops had not five or six thousand pounds a year.

In short, dear Sir, I wish you not to lose your time; that is, either not reply, or set *your mark* on your answer, that it may always be read with the rest of your works.

1783. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 3, 1779.

At last, after ten weeks, I have been able to remove hither, in hopes change of air and the frost will assist my recovery; though I am not one of those ancients that forget the register, and think they are to be as well as ever after every fit of illness. As yet I can barely creep about the room in the middle of the day.

I have made my Printer (now my secretary) copy out the rest of Mr. Baker's Life; for my own hand will barely serve to write necessary letters, and complains even of them. If you know of any very trusty person passing between London and Cambridge, I would

send it to you, but should not care to trust it by the coach, nor to any giddy undergraduate that comes to town to see a play; and, besides, I mean to return you your own notes. I will say no more than I have said in my apology to you for the manner in which I have written this Life. With regard to Mr. Baker himself, I am confident you will find that I have done full justice to his work and character. I do not expect you to approve the inferences I draw against some other persons; and yet, if his conduct was meritorious, it would not be easy to excuse those who were *active* after doing what he would not do. You will not understand this sentence till you have seen the Life.

I hope you have not been untiled or unpaled by the tempest on New-year's morning.[1] I have lost two beautiful elms in a row before my windows here, and had the skylight demolished in town. Lady Pomfret's Gothic house in my street lost one of the stone towers, like those at King's Chapel, and it was beaten through the roof. The top of our cross, too, at Ampthill was thrown down, as I hear from Lady Ossory this morning. I remember to have been told that Bishop Kidder and his wife were killed in their bed in the palace of Gloucester in 1709,[2] and yet his heirs were sued for dilapidations.

Lord de Ferrers,[3] who deserves his ancient honours, is going to repair the castle at Tamworth, and has flattered me that he will consult me. He has a violent passion for ancestry—and, consequently, I trust will not stake the patrimony of the Ferrarii, Townshends, and Comptons, at the hazard-table. A little pride would not hurt our nobility, cock and hen. Adieu, dear Sir! send me a good account of yourself. Yours ever.

[1] On the morning of the 1st of January, 1779, London was visited by one of the most violent tempests ever known. Scarcely a public building in the metropolis escaped without damage.—Wright.

[2] The memorable storm here alluded to took place in November, 1703, and Bishop Kidder and his lady perished in their bed at the episcopal palace at Wells, by the fall of a stack of chimneys. They were privately interred in the cathedral; and one of his daughters, dying single, directed by her will a monument to be erected for her parents.—Wright.

[3] Robert, sixth Earl Ferrers. He had just succeeded to the title, by the death of his brother Washington, vice-admiral of the blue, who had begun to rebuild the mansion of Stanton-Harold, in Leicestershire, according to a plan of his own, and lived to see it nearly finished.—Wright.

1784. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 3, 1779.

Your Ladyship may be surprised at my dating hence, till you know my reasons. I mended so slowly in town that I hoped change of air would do better; but I moved with as much circumspection as if General Washington was watching me. I took the air four times in Hyde Park, before I began my march, and had this house baked for a week previously, and stayed for the frost. All these precautions have answered, negatively, that is, I have not suffered. I move but from the Red to the Blue room, and cannot walk even those three yards yet; but my spirits are better, which always flag when the fever is quite gone; so all my vivacity when I was at the worst was a little light-headed. In truth, I was so weary of town, which is a desert, and saw so very few people for the last week, that I could not bear it. I had no books or papers, or dogs or cats to amuse me, so I was swaddled up, and here I am; if I had anything else to say, I would have spared you this preface on myself, Madam.

[1] An interval of a whole year here occurs in the correspondence. It might have been caused by the death of Lady Holland, which occurred on the 4th October, 1778, of whom the following beautiful character is written by Lord Ossory:

"My beloved sister Mary, Lady Holland, died on the 4th Oct. 1778. I look upon that as the second great misfortune of my life (I mean in point of date) the first being the loss of Lord Tavistock in 1767. Lady Holland (I am sure I speak without prejudice) was the most amiable person that ever lived. She possessed the most perfect sweetness of manners, joined to an excellent understanding; the most elegant person; but, alas! too delicate a frame. Her temper was the evenest I was ever acquainted with; her heart the tenderest and most sincere. She had a particular talent in discerning the ridiculous parts in the character of those she was acquainted with, but never in exposing, although she sometimes indulged in touching upon them among her friends; this she did with infinite humour and pleasantry. She had a taste for wit without possessing it in a conspicuous degree; her talent was rather what is called humour, of seeing through and well the follies of the world. She was the best wife that ever was, and in the most trying situation that can be conceived nothing could exceed her tenderness of attention to her children, and her affection to us, her unhappy brothers and sisters; her friendship to a few whose happiness it was to be her friends. To this tenderness, which prompted her to run immediately to the nursery, she owed her safety, when Winterslow House was burnt down, as appears from the following passage of a letter from Mrs. Greville to her daughter, Mrs. afterwards Lady Crewe, giving an account of the event:—'It was happy for Lady Mary that her first impulse was to run to the nursery, for had she gone her usual way, and the shortest from the room, which was the little back-staircase to the library, she would have met all the flames.' She never applied sufficiently to make herself perfect either in drawing or music, but in both these arts her taste was inimitable, and her execution elegant and graceful to the last degree. Why should this bright example of every virtue have been persecuted with the most cruel illness, which brought her to the grave at the age of 32?"—R. Vernon Smith.

The year commenced, indeed, with a very significant tempest: I grieve for the Cross at Ampthill, but if storms have any meaning, I believe they do not come to give hints to individuals, but to nations. That on the New Year's morning was a very general declaration, and legible from Arlington Street to this place. The road was strewed with tiles, pales, bricks, and trees. I counted seven of the latter down, two entire garden-walls at Brentford, as Mr. Whitchurch's and Mr. Franks's are here. My skylight was demolished in town, and here I have lost two beautiful elms in a line with this bow-window. Lady Jersey would not grieve more if she had lost two of her pretty fore-teeth. One of the stone Gothic towers at Lady Pomfret's house (now single-speech Hamilton's) in my street fell through the roof, and not a thought of it remains. There were only two maids in the house, who luckily lay backwards; but the greatest ruin is at my nephew Dysart's at Ham, where five-and-thirty of the old elms are blown down. I think it no loss, as I hope now one shall see the river from the house. He never would cut a twig to see the most beautiful scene upon earth.

Don't you like the remonstrance of the twelve Admirals? and did you expect a rebellion in Wales? The Ministers are not lucky in their attempts to raise a revenue; nor, indeed, in raising anything but rebellions. I begin to think we shall revert into a Heptarchy. I was diverted last week with a speech of Lord Townshend: he was coming out of Lord North's levee where he had *extorted* some favour, and met an acquaintance going in. "Well," said he, "what are you going to ask?" The person was shy: "Come, come," said the Viscount, "I am sure you want something: here, I'll lend you my pistols."

You certainly laugh at me, Madam, when you propose my writing for you to Curtius. I have not his direction here, or would send it to you; but to be sure a letter for him to be left at his printer's would do.

I intend returning to the capital on Tuesday, if I am able to go abroad; or else shall stay here, where I have more comforts, and can divert myself better than waiting for accidental visits; for I make a rule never to ask anybody to come to me, which is intercepting them from something they would like better; if I end in my arm-chair, it shall be a punishment to nobody else.

1785. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Jan 5, 1779.

Old women, our only remaining prophets, except the Opposition and a little common sense, prognosticate great woes for the coming year, from the omens of its first day. A tempest at the instant of the new year made terrible havoc of tiles, chimneys, and trees; and at night great part of Greenwich Hospital was burnt. I doubt casualties will not be the sole completion of the augury. There is actually great apprehension for Jamaica, or, at least, some of the West Indian Islands. I believe there are no eggs laid for achievements on our side, but some for discontent. The trial of Admiral Keppel is most unpopular, especially with his own profession. Lord Hawke and eleven other Admirals have presented to the King a remonstrance against the precedent, on the lateness of the complaint, on the impropriety of it as subjecting Commanders-in-Chief to the uncertainty of opinion, and on the precipitation of the Admiralty in ordering the trial. A draft of the Remonstrance was shown to Mr. Keppel himself; he tore it, and desired it might not be presented. This did him great honour, but did not prevent the delivery. I should think the Parliament would meet again in cloudy weather, though they may vote it is fair.

I came hither on New Year's Day to try change of weather, as I mend very slowly, or not at all. In truth, I expect but little melioration. My natural weakness, with so many attacks, so much gout in my constitution, and sixty-one—no elastic age, make me conclude that I shall not pass much of my remaining time out of my own houses. It is a doom I shall not struggle with: I have no idea of forcing a helpless skeleton upon other people, nor can see myself but what I am. It seems strange to me that so many decrepit cardinals should have accepted the tiara, when they were as likely to be buried as crowned.

I shall carry this letter to town with me to-morrow, and add any news, if I hear any before Friday. I might, from the little I had to say, have waited till the Parliament met next week; but it seems as if I had not written to you for some time. Your nephew, I conclude, is out of town, for I have seen him but the once I told you. But I am still more impatient to hear from you again, as your last left you with remains of fever I know you are not rash, and know

how to manage yourself in fevers; but you have not good Dr. Cocchi to watch you, and I have no opinion of Italian Galens. I think, too, that there was low-spirited accent in your style, but trust it was the effect of the times. I impute to that habit an expression, which, though the effusion of your friendship and tenderness for me, I must reclaim against. You say, you *love* and *adore* me. Jesus! my dear Sir! What an object of adoration! You put me in mind of what I have read in some traveller, who, viewing some Indian temple that blazed with gold and jewels, was at last introduced into the *sanctum sanctorum*, where behind the veil sat the object of worship—an old baboon! and, perhaps, poor pug's inside, as well as out, was fairer than mine!

8th.

I have no news to add: all eyes are now on Portsmouth, where the trial began yesterday. Prudence is not gone thither, nor had any hand in the business: but she has been out of fashion for some time; and her mimic, Cunning, does not act her part with success. Adieu!

1786. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 9, 1779.

Your flight to Bath would have much surprised me, if Mr. Churchill, who, I think, heard it from Stanley, had not prepared me for it. Since you was amused, I am glad you went, especially as you escaped being initiated in Mrs. Miller's follies at Bath-Easton, which you would have mentioned. She would certainly have sent some trapes of a Muse to press you, had she known what good epigrams you write.

I went to Strawberry partly out of prudence, partly from *ennui*. I thought it best to air myself before I go in and out of hot rooms here, and had my house thoroughly warmed for a week previously, and then only stirred from the Red room to the Blue on the same floor. I stayed five days, and was neither the better nor the worse for it. I was quite tired with having neither company, books, nor amusement of any kind. Either from the emptiness of the town, or that ten weeks of gout have worn out the patience of all my acquaintance, but I do not see three persons in three days. This gives me but an uncomfortable prospect for my latter days: it is but probable that I may be a cripple in a fit or two more, if I have

strength to go through them; and as that will be long life, one outlives one's acquaintance. I cannot make new acquaintance, nor interest myself at all about the young, except those that belong to me; nor does that go beyond contributing to their pleasures, without having much satisfaction in their conversation—But—one must take everything as it comes, and make the best of it. I have had a much happier life than I deserve, and than millions that deserve better. I should be very weak if I could not bear the uncomfortableness of old age, when I can afford what comforts it is capable of. How many poor old people have none of them! I am ashamed whenever I am peevish, and recollect that I have fire and servants to help me.

I hear Admiral Keppel is in high spirits with the great respect and zeal expressed for him. In my own opinion, his constitution will not stand the struggle. I am very uneasy too for the Duke of Richmond, who is at Portsmouth, and will be at least as much agitated.

Sir William Meredith has written a large pamphlet, and a very good one. It is to show, that whenever the Grecian republics taxed their dependents, the latter resisted, and shook off the yoke. He has printed but twelve copies: the Duke of Gloucester sent me one of them. There is an anecdote of my father, on the authority of old Jack White, which I doubt. It says, he would not go on with the Excise scheme, though his friends advised it. I cannot speak to the particular event, as I was then at school; but it was more like him to have yielded, against his sentiments, to Mr. Pelham and his candid—or say, plausible and timid friends. I have heard him say, that he never did give up his opinion to such men but he always repented it. However, the anecdote in the book would be more to his honour. But what a strange man is Sir William! I suppose, now he has written this book, he will change his opinion, and again be for carrying on the war—or, if he does not know his own mind for two years together, why will he take places, to make everybody doubt his honesty?

1787. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Jan. 14, 1779.

By not hearing from me for a fortnight you may imagine, Madam, that I go out, and have been diverting myself to repair lost time.

Oh! my life is very giddy and dissipated! My exquisite enjoyment has consisted in two returns of pain and lameness; my expeditions, taking the air, with the contrast of new confinement; and my *menus plaisirs*, a few sprinkled visits of charity from a few friends that remained in town. My silence, therefore, has proceeded from suppression of lamentations, and from having nothing to place in their stead.

By Monday I expect company and events; but as I hope you and Lord Ossory will be in the former class, I shall have no occasion to send you the latter. I have heard nothing but what cannot interest your Ladyship or me, that Lady Priscilla Bertie [1] is to marry Mr. Burrell, and that an Irish Lady Kingsborough has introduced the fashionable fashion of elopements at Dublin.

There is, in sooth, a charming novelty to-day of a very different kind; an answer from Mr. Gibbon to the monks that have attacked his two famous chapters. It is the quintessence of argument, wit, temper, spirit, and consequently of victory. I did not expect anything so luminous in this age of Egyptian darkness—nor the monks either. Alas! how can he have any of the leaven left?

Did you see Mr. Anstey's verses at Bath-Easton? They were truly more a production of this century; and not at all too good for a schoolboy. In the printed copy they have omitted an indecent stanza or two on Mrs. Macaulay. In truth Dame Thucydides has made but an uncouth match; but Anstey has tumbled from a greater height than she. Sense may be led astray by the senses; but how could a man write the 'Bath Guide,' and then nothing but doggerel and stupidity?

Mr. Crawfurd has come in as I was writing; he tells me every thing goes *swimmingly* for Admiral Keppel, which he is very glad of; but he is very sorry for Palliser. I cannot be so equitable, if it is unjust to rejoice that a scoundrel is odious; besides, it will give a hint that it is not absolutely safe to be so.

1788. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Jan. 15, 1779.

I SEND you by Dr. Jacob, as you desired, my Life of Mr. Baker, and with it your own materials. I beg you will communicate my manuscript to nobody, but if you think it worth your trouble I will

[1] Daughter of the Duke of Ancaster.—CUNNINGHAM.

consent to your transcribing it; but on one condition, and a silly one for me to exact, who am as old as you, and broken to pieces, and very unlikely to survive you; but, should so improbable a thing happen, I must exact that you will keep your transcript sealed up, with orders written on the cover to be restored to me in case of an accident, for I should certainly dislike very much to see it printed without my consent.

I should not think of your copying it, if you did not love to transcribe, and sometimes things of as little value as my manuscript. I shall beg to have it returned to me by a safe hand as soon as you can, for I have nothing but the foul copy which nobody can read, I believe, but I and my secretary.

I am actually printing my justification about Chatterton, but only two hundred copies to give away; for I hate calling in the whole town to a fray, of which otherwise probably not one thousand persons would ever hear. You shall have a copy as soon as ever it is finished, which my Printer says will be in three weeks.

You know my Printer is my secretary too: do not imagine I am giving myself airs of a numerous household of officers. I shall be glad to see the letter of Mr. Baker you mentioned. You will perceive two or three notes in my manuscript in a different hand from mine, or that of my amanuensis (still the same officer): they were added by a person I lent it to, and I have effaced part of the last.

I must finish lest Dr. Jacob should call, and my parcel not be ready. I hope your sore throat is gone: my gout has returned again a little with taking the air only, but did not stay—however, I am still confined, and almost ready to remain so, to prevent disappointment. Yours most sincerely.

1789. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, Jan. 28, 1779.

I WRITE in as much hurry as you did, dear Sir, and thank you for the motive of yours: mine is to prevent your fatiguing yourself in copying my manuscript, for which I am not in the least haste: pray keep it till another safe conveyance presents itself. You may bring the gout, that is, I am sorry to hear, flying about you, into your hand by wearying it.

How can you tell me I may well be cautious about my manuscript and yet advise me to print it?—No—I shall not provoke nests of hornets, till I am dust, as they will be too.

If I dictated tales when ill in my bed, I must have been worse than I thought; for, as I know nothing of it, I must have been light-headed. Mr. Lort was certainly misinformed, though he seems to have told you the story kindly to the honour of my philosophy or spirits—but I had rather have no fame than what I do not deserve.

I am fretful or low-spirited at times in the gout, like other weak old men, and have less to boast than most men. I have some strange things in my drawer, even wilder than the 'Castle of Otranto,' and called 'Hieroglyphic Tales;'[1] but they were not written lately, nor in the gout, nor, whatever they may seem, written when I was out of my senses. I showed one or two of them to a person since my recovery, who may have mentioned them, and occasioned Mr. Lort's misintelligence. I did not at all perceive that the latter looked ill; and hope he is quite recovered. You shall see Chatterton soon. Adieu!

1790. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Jan. 29, 1779.

Suspense still! The Court-martial continues, and everything respectfully awaits its determination: even France and America seem to lie upon their oars till the oracle at Portsmouth has pronounced. The response, however, is not likely to be ambiguous. There has been such juggling to warp the judgment of the priests of Neptune; and the frauds have been so openly detected, and salt-water Flamens are so boisterous when they can see through an imposition; that Palliser and his accomplices, high and low, will probably rue the tempest they have brewed. I hinted in my last that there is a man,[2] whom you once knew well, that prefers cunning to prudence: he will not exult in the choice he has made. The Duke of Marlborough and Lord Pembroke declare against the First Lord of the Admiralty; the second is expected to be less out of humour with the Court-martial than with being denied the Master-

[1] These tales, six in number, are printed in the *fourth* volume of Walpole's Works. — Cunningham.

[2] Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty.—Walpole.

ship of the Horse; but, when a tide turns, it sweeps many along with it. I will say no more of politics; the horizon does not clear—but I have no events to tell you. I write only to amuse your impatience.

Garrick is dead; not a public loss, for he had quitted the stage. He is to be buried on Monday in great ceremony in Westminster Abbey; but, not having been so inattentive to worldly riches as Lord Chatham, his family will not be provided for by Parliament. They had both great merit in their different walks, and were both good actors; but we are Athenians enough to be full as fond of the Stage as of the State. Both, at present, are a little in want of a genius.

There is a report that the poor simple Lord Maynard[1] has shot himself at Naples—is it true? The Duke of Dorset is almost in as bad a scrape as if *he* had married Lady Maynard. He is waiting for a Duchess till Lady Derby[2] is divorced. He would not marry her before Lord Derby did, and now is forced to take her, when he himself has made her a very bad match. A quarter of our Peeresses will have been wives of half our living Peers.[3]

You must be content with these brief letters, while I write for your satisfaction rather than for your information. I am recovered enough to go to a few places; but I do not, nor can expect to mend so fast as when younger.

1791. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[4]

My Dear Lord: *Feb.* 1, 1779.

Mrs. Damer has consulted me on a case of heraldic conscience, on which I am not competent: you must forgive me for troubling your Lordship, for whither can I recur but to an oracle? She has been told that she has no right to use crest and motto, is that so? Ought not she, too, as an only child, to bear her arms in an escutcheon of pretence?

I was at the Vesey—chaos last night, and wish Lady Harcourt

[1] He had married the well-known Nancy Parsons [vol. iv. p. 270], who had been kept by the Dukes of Grafton, Dorset, &c.; but it was not true that he had killed himself.—Walpole.

[2] Lady Elizabeth Hamilton. The divorce did not take place.—Walpole.

[3] Was he thinking at this time of his friend the Countess of Ossory—the divorced Duchess of Grafton?—Cunningham.

[4] Now first published.—Cunningham.

and your Lordship had been behind a cloud. I must do Mrs. Montagu the justice to say, that I never heard more warm encomiums on both, and the Irish bore equal testimonies.

I hope you are all perfectly easy about Mrs. Harcourt, of whom I heard a very good account yesterday.

Your Lordship's most dutiful,

H. Walpole.

1792. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Feb. 1, 1779.

When Lord Ossory is in town, Madam, I do not presume to think of writing. He is more in the world, and hears everything sooner than I do; nor would it be fair to him, to divide a moment of your time with him. However, there were such interesting topics in the letter I had the honour of receiving this evening, that I must answer it directly. But I shall waive the first subject, which concerns myself, to come to the last, that touches your Ladyship; and can I but admire your goodness in thinking of me, when an angel is inoculated? You must now continue it, for you have promised I shall hear how she goes on. Sweet little love! you must be anxious, though inoculation now can scarce be called a hazard. It is as sure, as a cheat of winning, though a strange run of luck may once in two thousand times disappoint him.

The pictures at Houghton, I hear, and I fear, are sold: what can I say? I do not like even to think on it. It is the most signal mortification to my idolatry for my father's memory, that it could receive. It is stripping the temple of his glory and of his affection. A mad man excited by rascals has burnt his Ephesus. I must never cast a thought towards Norfolk more; nor will hear my nephew's name if I can avoid it. Him I can only pity; though it is strange he should recover any degree of sense, and never any of feeling! I could have saved my family, but cannot repent the motives that bound my hands. If any unhappy lunatic is ever the better for my conduct and example, it is preferable to a collection of pictures.

Yes, Madam, I do think the pomp of Garrick's funeral perfectly ridiculous.[1] It is confounding the immense space between pleasing

[1] "In Italy I became acquainted with Garrick, and from my earliest youth having admired him on the stage, was happy to be familiarly acquainted with him, cultivated his society from that time till his death, and then accompanied him to his grave as one of his pall-bearers. He and Mrs. Garrick (I think it was in 1777) have been with

talents and national services. What distinctions remain for a patriot hero, when the most solemn have been showered on a player?—but when a great empire is on its decline, one symptom is, there being more eagerness on trifles than on essential objects. Shakspeare, who *wrote* when Burleigh counselled and Nottingham fought, was not rewarded and honoured like Garrick who only *acted*, when—indeed I do not know who has counselled and who has fought.

I do not at all mean to detract from Garrick's merit, who was a real genius in his way, and who, I believe, was never equalled in both tragedy and comedy. Still I cannot think that acting, however perfectly, what others have written, is one of the most astonishing talents: yet I will own as fairly that Mrs. Porter and Mademoiselle Dumenil have struck me so much, as even to reverence them. Garrick never affected me quite so much as those two actresses, and some few others in particular parts, as Quin, in Falstaff; King, in Lord Ogleby; Mrs. Pritchard, in Maria, in the Nonjuror; Mrs. Clive, in Mrs. Cadwallader; and Mrs. Abington, in Lady Teazle. They all seemed the very persons: I suppose that in Garrick I thought I saw more of his art; yet his Lear, Richard, Hotspur (which the town had not taste enough to like), Kitely, and Ranger, were as capital and perfect as action could be. In declamation, I confess, he never charmed me; nor could he be a gentleman; his Lord Townley and Lord Hastings were mean, but then too the parts are indifferent, and do not call for a master's exertion.

I should shock Garrick's *devotees* if I uttered all my opinion: I will trust your Ladyship with it—it is, that Le Texier is twenty times the genius. What comparison between the powers that do the fullest justice to a single part, and those that instantaneously can fill a whole piece, and transform themselves with equal perfection into men and women, and pass from laughter to tears, and make you shed the latter at both? Garrick, when he made one laugh, was not always judicious, though excellent. What idea did his Sir John Brute give of a Surly Husband. His Bayes was no less entertaining; but it was a Garretteer-bard. Old Cibber preserved the solemn coxcomb; and was the caricature of a great poet, as the part was designed to be.

us in the country; Gibbon and Reynolds, at the same time, all three delightful in society. The vivacity of the great actor, the keen sarcastic wit of the great historian, and the genuine pleasantry of the great painter, mixed up well together, and made a charming party. Garrick's mimicry of the mighty Johnson was excellent."—*From Lord Ossory's Memoranda.*—R. Vernon Smith.

Half I have said I know is heresy, but fashion had gone to excess, though very rarely with so much reason. Applause had turned his head, and yet he was never content even with that prodigality. His jealousy and envy were unbounded; he hated Mrs. Clive, till she quitted the stage, and then cried her up to the skies, to depress Mrs. Abington. He did not love Mrs. Pritchard, and with more reason, for there was more spirit and originality in her Beatrice than in his Benedick.

But if the town did not admire his acting more than it deserved, which indeed in general it was difficult to do, what do you think, Madam, of its prejudice, even for his writings? What stuff was his Jubilee Ode, and how paltry his Prologues and Epilogues! I have always thought that he was just the counterpart of Shakspeare; this, the first of writers, and an indifferent actor; that, the first of actors, and a woeful author. Posterity would believe me, who will see only his writings; and who will see those of another modern idol, far less deservedly enshrined, Dr. Johnson. I have been saying this morning, that the latter deals so much in triple tautology,[1] or the fault of repeating the same sense in three different phrases, that I believe it would be possible, taking the ground-work for all three, to make one of his 'Ramblers' into three different papers, that should all have exactly the same purport and meaning, but in different phrases. It would be a good trick for somebody to produce one and read it; a second would say, "Bless me, I have this very paper in my pocket, but in quite other diction;" and so a third.

Our lord has been so good as to call on me again, and found me; but I take for granted will make his little Gertrude a visit to-morrow, though probably not bring your Ladyship with him till she is recovered. I am in no pain, even for her beauty.

As the court-martial is likely to end this week, I suppose the parliamentary campaign will be warmly renewed the next; but what campaign will restore this country to its greatness? It is blotted out of the list of mighty empires; and they who love processions, may make a splendid funeral for it!—but indeed it was buried last year, with Lord Chatham, at whose interment there were not half the noble coaches that attended Garrick's!

Feb. 9, 1779.

I am thoroughly concerned, Madam, for yours and Lord Ossory's

[1] Alluding to his 'Criticisms on Johnson's Writings,' printed in his Works, vol. iv. pp. 361—2.—CUNNINGHAM.

disappointment, and very sorry you trusted to a surgeon in the country, as they must have less experience. However, if a second trial should fail, you may be very easy, for I believe there is scarce an instance of the small pox naturally, after two inoculations. The late Lady Lothian, who was in that case, I know never had it. For your perfect tranquillity, I still wish it may appear; she will certainly have very few, with so little disposition to infection.

You are both so very partial to me, Madam, that I dare not gulp your commendation of the pamphlet. I wrote it, just to say I had cleared myself, and have given very few away, and had rather it was soon forgotten, as it is likely to be, in such distracted times. I sincerely do not recollect why I did not return the first papers; I have spoken strict truth to the best of my memory, and cannot tell whether I forgot or reserved them to transcribe.

You blame my humility, and therefore I will not give the answer you expect; especially, as I have others ready. In the first place, I have not impartiality enough for such a work as Mr. Elmsley thinks me fit for. In the next, it would be an imitation, and there even my humility fails me; and the last and strongest plea is, that I am twenty years too old to write what if well written would demand twenty years to write, allowing the necessary time for collecting materials; but I have already scribbled a vast deal too much. I must publish my fourth volume of 'Painters,' and then intend the world shall hear my name no more.

The weather has been disagreeably too hot, but I cannot say has affected me *en bien ou en mal.* I certainly recover more slowly than ever as is natural; and therefore conclude reasonably that one more severe fit will totally confine me. I go nowhere but into very private rooms, nor think of others; and now dispense with my saying any more of myself, Madam. You forbid me humility, and yet all I say and do is founded on the consciousness of my own weakness, and on the dread of being blind to my own defects.

We are in greater confusion than all the world knows. Last night came an account of a serious insurrection at Edinburgh, where the mob has burnt two mass-houses, and threatened some lives. The state of Ireland is still more alarming: Lord Buckingham is coming away. There are rumours of changes, and certainly overtures for them. It is declared that Lord Suffolk desires to retire. We may have novelties; but whence is there any hope?

I give your Ladyship my word that I know of no offers that my nieces have refused or even received. Lies are so rampant that they

may have been involved in the havoc. One would think there were sad subjects enough of all sorts to glut the maw of ill-nature, but like Crawfurd it had rather dine where it is not asked than where invited. Your Ladyship's words imply no malicious account in what you have been told; but falsehood is predominant, and not a hundredth part of what one hears every day is true.

I long to hear that you are at ease about Lady Gertrude; and then I will indulge the hope of seeing you. In the mean time pray permit me in my turn to tax your Ladyship's humility. Pray read all Mr. Gibbon's pamphlet, and do not fear not understanding it. It is luminous as day, and clearness one of his brightest talents. I am sure the whole will delight you. It is Mr. Gibbon that *can make the driest subject interesting and entertaining*, and his reply to Davies is the strongest evidence that can be given.

1793. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Feb. 4, 1779.

I HAVE received the manuscript, and though you forbid my naming the subject more, I love truth, and truth in a friend so much, that I must tell you, that so far from taking your sincerity ill, I had much rather you should act with your native honest sincerity than say you was pleased with my manuscript. I have always tried as much as is in human nature to divest myself of the self-love of an author; in the present case I had less difficulty than ever, for I never thought my Life of Mr. Baker one of my least indifferent works. You might, believe me, have sent me your long letter; whatever it contained, it would not have made a momentary cloud between us. I have not only friendship, but great gratitude for you, for a thousand instances of kindness; and should detest any writing of mine that made a breach with a friend, and still more if it could make me forget obligations.

1794. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 11, 1779.

I AM only getting ready this letter for to-morrow, when it is to set out with the full triumph of Admiral Keppel, which is expected in town to-night from Portsmouth. The fronts of several houses are

already decorated with lamps, and, as soon as the courier arrives, I suppose the whole town will be in a blaze—I hope, only of light; but, when a mob expresses its joy, one may always fear lest it should mistake mischief for merriment. The guards are ordered to be doubled: I fancy, a few of them will not be far from the Admiralty.[1]

The good people of Edinburgh have set but an ugly example. There has been a serious insurrection against the Papists, and two mass-houses were burnt; and the Provost quieted the tumult only by promising that the toleration of Popery should not be extended to Scotland. This will be agreeable news to the Americans, who did not expect to see the Administration reproved by Scots.

You will not be agitated by popular rumours. If I repeat them to you, it is, that if anything should happen, you may not be surprised. In a word, some changes at least are expected, particularly in the Admiralty, the rudder of which, it is said, has been offered to Lord Howe,—some say, and refused by him; others, that he objected to Lord George Germaine; and others, that he demands an inquiry on himself and his brother. Lord Suffolk is certainly to retire on the plea of infirmity, which is a reason why he should not come into place; and Lord Buckingham is to quit Ireland, and, I believe, is allowed to say, at his own request too—he also might have had an earlier plea: in short, difficulties at present are more plentiful than resources. *Per contra*, Spain is said to have offered us her mediation, and to have it accepted. Yesterday I heard that the Duke of Medina Sidonia had actually set out for Paris on that errand, but was dead on the road. The want of a successor will not be an impediment, if there is no other.

This minute I receive your tender letter of the 16th of last month: but pray, my dear Sir, be easy about me; I am as much recovered as probably I shall be. I go out, and walk tolerably with a cane. To be sure, another severe fit may confine me at home; but, as I do not indulge distant hopes, why should I disturb myself with future fears? I have patience and submission, and they are at least as potent as care. Of everything I make the best I can. Immediate vexations one cannot easily divert; but gloomy thoughts that are resident, and return only when the mind is vacant, I remove by any amusement that offers. This is my case about my nephew and Houghton. I forget them as fast as possible, though I own they

[1] Lord Sandwich, Keppel's enemy, was First Lord of the Admiralty.—WALPOLE.

frequently return It is very true, I did desire the pictures should be sold, as I preferred his paying his grandfather's and father's debts to false splendour; but that is not the case now. As he is not legally obliged, he does not think of acquitting his father's debts; and, as he has compounded his grandfather's unsatisfied debts for fifteen thousand pounds, he does not want forty thousand. In short, I am persuaded that the villanous crew about him, knowing they could not make away clandestinely with the collection in case of his death, prefer money they can easily appropriate to themselves. Whether the price affixed is adequate, or too low, is difficult to say. Imaginary value depends on circumstances and times. I once should have thought forty thousand pounds a high price: the whole collection made by my father, of which there have already been three sales, cost but that sum. Five years ago, with the opulence and rage for *virtù*, they would have produced more. At present, not so much. Last night I heard the bargain is not concluded. Cipriani was desired to value them, and has called in West.[1] To be sure, I should wish they were rather sold to the Crown of England than to that of Russia, where they will be burnt in a wooden palace on the first insurrection: here they would be still Sir Robert Walpole's Collection. But my grief is that they are not to remain at Houghton, where he placed them, and wished them to remain. Pride and pity leave me but that desire.

At midnight.

I am this moment come in, and may as well write to you as go to bed; for it is impossible to sleep, from the noise of squibs and crackers. The Sentence arrived at half-an-hour after nine, and in two hours the whole town was illuminated. I drove with two ladies from Grosvenor Square to Spring Garden, to wish old Lady Albemarle[2] joy. She had just been blooded, for she is seventy-five, but you may imagine was in happy spirits; for the Sentence is as honourable as possible, and terms the accusation unfounded and malicious in every article. Palliser escaped from Portsmouth this morning at five, and arrived in a hired post-chaise at the Admiralty; but was known as he entered, and was pulled by the populace by the coat, but got in safe. We passed twice by his house in Pall Mall just now, and found a mob before it, but a strong guard of soldiers

[1] See note at p. 227 of this volume.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Lady Anne Lennox, youngest daughter of Charles Lennox, first Duke of Richmond, widow of William-Anne second Earl of Albemarle, mother of George third Earl, and of Admiral Augustus Keppel.—WALPOLE.

and constables. The people have not been riotous yet: but as they are flinging squibs, and the streets are full, there will be accidents if no determined mischief. I hope to-morrow morning to hear that the night has passed quietly, which will be to the honour of the Opposition. The Opposition in my father's time were not of so harmless a complexion; but as he was guiltless, which is known and allowed now, malevolence could only keep up a spirit against him by clamour. But, good night! I will reserve the rest of my paper for to-morrow.

Friday morn, 12*th.*

My servants, who have been out this morning, tell me that about three o'clock the mob forced their way into Palliser's house, in spite of the guards, and demolished everything in it; and that they broke the windows of Lord George Germaine and of Lord North, and that several of the rioters are taken up. How wise in an unsuccessful Administration to have commenced accusation!

You talk of skating on the Arno—it is hot enough here to bathe in the Thames. I was literally forced to throw off the quilt of my bed the night before last—the women are afraid of an earthquake. I will write again soon, for I think there will be matter.

P.S. The mob entirely gutted Sir Hugh Palliser's house, but the furniture had been removed.

1795. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Bedfordshire, Feb. 17, 1779.

I ACCEPT Lady Gertrude's single pustule, Madam, in full of all accounts: it is an ambassador that completely represents its principal, and is authorised to sign *peace* in its name. I could almost imagine that you had sent me the pimple itself, *for* I found a rosebud and two cowslips in your letter, which would be a prettier transformation than any in Ovid.

I am not fond of mobs, Madam, though I like the occasion, and can but compare the feel I had from them, with what I should suffer were the illuminations for the conquest of America. After putting out those lights we should have heard,—

And then put out *the* light.

Liberty has still a continent to exist in: I do not care a straw

who is minister in this abandoned country. It is the *good old cause of freedom* that I have at heart; and the vexation and mortification that I have seen for these last days, tell me what we have escaped, if I did not know it before.

We had a most brilliant Westminster last night, and guns and squibs till six in the morning; but the City, I hear, was not illuminated. Lady Greenwich, looking uglier than ever with rage, said, she would go out of town, since she could not be safe in her own house. I replied, Madam, I believe your Ladyship must not go to Edinburgh to be quiet, for the tumults there are a little more serious than ours. In truth, I, who was born in an age of mobs, never saw any like those of this week; they were, as George Montagu said of our earthquakes, *so tame you might have stroked them.* I drove through the whole City beyond the Royal Exchange on Friday night with my nieces, to show them the illuminations, and back through Holborn and St. James's Square, where was the greatest concourse, and passed as quietly as at noon day. I own I was diverted to see fear surmount pride. The Duke of Northumberland, who, on the eve of accepting his place, would have drenched the populace with beer and ale, would not put out lights till midnight, and then was forced to hang out flambeaux; and so was Lord Weymouth, who has been in a charming panic, for he has no spirit even when he is drunk. It is pleasant to see those who condemned the towns of America to fire and sword terrified with crackers.

I found Admiral Keppel at the Duchess of Richmond's this morning: he looks ill, and quite exhausted with fatigue. He has not been at Court, or the House of Commons yet, and will go out of town as soon as he can: for my part I shall not light another candle till Lady Gertrude arrives in full beauty.

1796. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Feb. 18, 1779.

I SENT you my Chattertoniad[1] last week, in hopes it would sweeten your pouting; but I find it has not, or has miscarried; for you have not acknowledged the receipt with your usual punctuality.

[1] "A Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton." Strawberry Hill, 1779, 8vo.—WRIGHT.

Have you seen Hasted's new 'History of Kent?'[1] I am sailing through it, but am stopped every minute by careless mistakes. They tell me the author has good materials, but is very negligent, and so I perceive. He has not even given a list of monuments in the churches, which I do not remember in any history of a county; but he is rich in pedigrees; though I suppose they have many errors too, as I have found some in those I am acquainted with. It is unpardonable to be inaccurate in a work in which one nor expects nor demands anything but fidelity.

We have a great herald arising in a very noble race, Lord de Ferrers. I hope to make him a Gothic architect too, for he is going to repair Tamworth Castle, and flatters me that I shall give him sweet counsel. I enjoin him to *crenellate*. Adieu! Yours ever.

1797. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1779.

I PROMISED you a sequel to my history of illuminations, and here it is. They were repeated on Friday night, the 12th; and were more universal than on the preceding evening, but without the least disorder or riot. The day before yesterday the Admiral himself arrived, as privately as he could; but at night all Westminster was again lighted up and part of the City, and guns and crackers were fired till morning, and yet no mischief done. The two Houses have voted compliments to him, and the City its freedom. Palliser has resigned his seat at the Admiralty, and vacated that in Parliament, for fear of being expelled. He has demanded a trial; but the Admiralty is accused of being less eager to order it than they were that of Keppel. The latter had not been at Court yesterday, nor in the House; but there have been motions in both Houses leading to the attack on Lord Sandwich. It is not known whether he will be removed or not. The town believes there have been negotiations with the Opposition, but that the terms offered were not satisfactory. I assert so little, that I shall certainly draw you into no rash credulity. Were you here, you might believe twenty false reports every hour.

[1] "The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent; by Edward Hasted;" four volumes, folio, 1778-1799. A second and improved edition, in twelve volumes, octavo, appeared in 1797—1801. Mr. Hasted died in 1812, at the age of eighty.—WRIGHT.

It is not always the case of persons at a distance to be the best informed; but you have a very cautious historian.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper till to-morrow; for, though I send you nothing but facts, every day may produce some event at present. The times have a bag of eggs like a pullet.

19*th.*

The Admiral was at the House yesterday, when the Speaker harangued him in a fine oration, they say; to which he made a very modest and pathetic answer. To-morrow he is to be congratulated and banqueted by the City, on which, I hear, we are again to be illuminated; but I am tired of crackers, and shall go quietly to Strawberry. There was to be a motion in the Commons to-day for addressing the King to remove Palliser from his other posts of General of the Marines and Governor of Scarborough; but I shall not know the result before the post is gone out, and must refer you to the newspapers.

The French will not like the *éclaircissement* of the Court-martial, by which it is clear they were beaten and fled. The City, which does not haggle, has expressed this a little grossly in their address to Keppel. I do not love exultation. There is no grace but in silent victory. Our insults to the Americans at the outset of the war were not in the character of this country; and double the shame on those who have certainly not been victorious over them! The authors of the war have made a woful figure from the beginning to this day!

1798. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Bedfordshire, Feb. 23, 1779.

As you bid me write again before your arrival, and do not name the day, I hurry to obey you, Madam, though I have nothing to tell you, but how happy I shall be to see you. Were I a good courtier, to be sure I should announce *the great news*, as called, of the capture of Santa Lucia. I did say, there was great want of good news when this conquest was so dignified! I think the last King of Great Britain should thence be called Lucius, as the first Christian King of it was. *My humility* does not stoop to exultation on such pigmy victories; but it does find matter of triumph on seeing that when your Ladyship pretends to vanity, you are still forced to borrow your proofs from humility: for is not it being lowly in mind

to be proud of agreeing in opinion with others, and not depending on your own taste? Your Ladyship's example will sooner confirm me than your arguments cure me; nay, I beg you will leave me one virtue, lest I should not be worth one. I have at the same time a supreme reverence for pride; for that honest pride that makes one respect one's self, and prevents one's wading through every kennel to keep one's place. Oh! that it should be possible to be insolent on the strength of majorities, and when the tide turns, to crouch to those one has insulted, and beseech them to accept of treachery to one's friends as an atonement! Humble or not, I would burst with pride rather than so debase myself.

The winter has, indeed, Madam, been worthy of last summer. On the contrary, Sir Horace Mann tells me, they have skating on the Anio. I went to Strawberry on Saturday to enjoy the sun, and to avoid the squibs and crackers. There was a great deal of glass shed at night, and they say the illuminations are to be repeated on Thursday, when the Admiral is to dine with the West India merchants.

The rejoicings have produced exceeding ill-humour, which being very productive of the same temper in its adversaries, I think the nation will awake a little from its slumbers. Whenever the thorough *reveil* does come, it will be very serious!

Poor Mrs. Brand is dead of a sore throat; Lady Priscilla Bertie is married to-day [to Peter Burrell, Esq.], and the Queen has produced another Prince.[1]

Pray make my Io Pæans to Lady Gertrude upon her recovery from renoculation; and tell Lady Anne that—

> C cannot claim Castalia's choicest lay,
> As Ann and Ampthill ask it all for A.

P.S.—Mr. Beauclerk has just called, and told me a shocking history. Sir Hugh Palliser has a sister at York, whom he supported. As if the poor woman was not wretched enough with his disgrace and ruin, or accessory to his guilt, the mob there has demolished her house, and she is gone mad. What a bill would the authors of the American war have to pay, if they were charged as they deserve with all the calamities it has given date to! however, I do believe they are as sorry as if they were penitent!

[1] Prince Octavius, died 1783.—CUNNINGHAM.

1799. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Feb. 25, 1779.

Your veritable nephew brought me, yesterday, your letter of the 6th, which came by the courier, and he has just sent me a message that your servant is to set out on his return at three o'clock. It is now noon, and I am expecting a person on business, so that I shall have but a minute to write.

My last letters have hinted at the disgraces Lord Sandwich's artifices have brought on the Court by the absurd persecution of Admiral Keppel. It was very nearly overturning the Administration; and the Chancellor, Lord Weymouth, and the Paymaster,[1] (a little faction of themselves,) would have tumbled the rest down, could they have offered enough to content the Opposition. I think the present system will hold together something longer, though their credit is much shaken. The Opposition is not very able, the session is far advanced, and a little success has arrived to prop them. St. Lucia is taken, secures St. Vincent's, and if Byron joins that expedition unhurt by D'Estaing, the West Indies will be saved. These are "Ifs;" but yet more than the ministers have had for some time. The other expedition to Georgia has prospered too, but is too small, and with the winter to struggle through, to be of much consequence: and you see we have not as yet sent a man to America of late, nor can get a thousand. In short, what I would not mention but by your own courier, nothing can be more deplorable than our prospect. It was but yesterday Lord North could tell the House he had got the money on the loan, and is happy to get it under eight per cent. Then the new taxes are to come, and new discontent; the ill-humour certainly rises very little in proportion to the distresses; yet even that has a bad cause—the indifference and dissipation of the whole country. I fear it must be some great blow that will rouse us. I doubt whether the French will think of Minorca. Our greatest felicity is, that they seem to have *thought* as little as we. Is it credible that they should have attempted nothing? The war hitherto has been a war of privateering, in which France has suffered most. In one word, the backwardness of Spain has saved us. Their junction with France had given the finishing blow.

[1] Mr. Rigby.—Walpole.

This is but a sketch, and as much as I have time to tell you. I do not say so much, nor anything to your nephew that might give him an impression that might recoil on you. Indeed, I do but look on, and lament the fall of England. Easy I am so far, that the ill-success of the American war has saved us from slavery—in truth, I am content that liberty will exist anywhere, and amongst Englishmen, even 'cross the Atlantic. The Scots, who planned our chains, have, as formerly, given the Court some heart-aches, and would be the first to give more if the tide should turn. I think the King will support Sandwich still; though the load on him is heavy. Admiral Keppel has behaved with much decency, and more temper than could be expected. There was more riot on Saturday, when he dined in the City, and much fracture of windows; but it is generally believed that the Court hired the mob, to make the other side sick of rejoicing. The Admiral has declined another dinner, with the West India merchants, to prevent more tumult; and, now St. Lucia is taken, I believe they are glad to be rid of him.

This is enough for a comment on my late letters. You know, I never shift my principles with times.[1] The times, alas! have shifted their principles; but I am interrupted, and must seal my letter, lest it be too late.

1800. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, March 9, 1779.

THERE has been a moment in which the scales have been more equally balanced than for some years; but the fluctuation has not lasted a week. On Wednesday, the Opposition in the House of Commons mounted to 170, and the majority sunk to 34. Yesterday, though the former mustered four more votes, the Administration rejected the motion by a majority of 72. The questions both days related to the Fleet. Yesterday Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe declared they could not serve under the present Ministers; yet I think the latter will stand their ground, even to Lord Sandwich, though the general opinion is that he will have the Seals, which Lord Suffolk's death has vacated.[2] He died at the Bath on Saturday,

[1] Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes.
Tenets with books, and principles with times.—*Pope.*—WALPOLE.

[2] Lord Stormont succeeded.—CUNNINGHAM.

whither he was but just arrived in a desperate state. His death is no blow but to his family. Seldom was he able to do any business; and had no talents when he could.

While I am writing to you I am wishing for some member of the House of Commons to come in, to give me an account of your nephew: for one of the morning papers says he spoke yesterday for the Court; and, though I am persuaded well, I want to be told so; and, as I dine abroad, I am at least as eager to be able to tell you so, and am afraid of not knowing it in time. I did write to you by your courier, but believe he did not set out by some days so soon as I expected; however, he must arrive before this.

We have, undoubtedly, made a great number of French prizes; and D'Estaing, in particular, has made a woful figure. They say at Paris, that, if ever he is Marshal of France, "au moins son bâton ne sera pas du bois de Sainte Lucie." There do not seem to spring many heroes out of this war on either side. Fame has shut her temple, too, in Germany: yet I think both the Emperor and King of Prussia have some claim on history; the latter by clipping Cæsar's soaring wings, and Cæsar by having kept so old and so able a professor at bay for a whole campaign. Still, the professor has carried a great point by having linked his interests with those of the Empire. The gratitude of those princes might soon wear out; but it is their interest to maintain a great, though new, power, that can balance the House of Austria.

We have no private news of any sort. As, by your desire, I write more frequently than formerly, you must be content with shorter letters; for distance and absence deprive us of the little incidents of common correspondence. I am forced to write to you of such events only as one would write to posterity. One cannot say, "I dined with such a person yesterday," when the letter is to be a fortnight on the road; still less, when you know nothing of my Lord or Mr. Such-an-one, whom I should mention.

Your nephew desired me to give him a list of pamphlets for you; I told him, as is true, that there is scarcely any such thing. The pamphleteers now vent themselves in quotidian letters in the newspapers. Formerly, you know, there were only weekly essays in a 'Fog's Journal' or 'Craftsman:' at present, every morning paper has one page of political invective at least, and so coarse, that they would be as sour as vinegar before they reached Florence: you would *cross* yourself at reading them.

I asked you about a report of Lord Maynard's sudden death. We

know it was false, and that his wife [Nancy Parsons], who has always some fascinating powder, has established herself at the Court of Naples, by dispensing James's. They say she is universally visited, except by those English prudes, the Countesses of Berkeley and Orford. I should not wonder if the former was to dethrone Lady Maynard by distributing Keysar's pills.[1]

P.S. I kept my letter open to the last minute, and am now vexed to tell you that 'The Public Advertiser' misled me. Your nephew did speak yesterday, and very well; but not for the Administration. It surprises me much; for the last time I saw him, not a fortnight ago, his language was very different, as it was before Christmas; and I told you how much I encouraged him in those sentiments on your account; not that I think any man could be so unjust as to impute his deviations to you, who would be the last man upon earth to instil opposition into him. I hope he has no such intention, and that this sally will have no suite. It would be impossible for me, and so out of character that it would have no weight, to argue with him, when I have ever so totally condemned the American war, which has undone us; but I shall entreat him not to frequent the House, and to return to you, rather than act a part that would be unpleasing to you. I think if, in your gentle way, you lamented yourself to him, his congenial nature would be more struck than even if he had not acted contrary to your wishes. I have not time to say a word more—but do not torment yourself. Trust to your own merit; and, if your modesty is too great for that, call in philosophy, that is a real comforter, when coupled with the consciousness of having done our duty.

1801. TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE.

Arlington Street, March 12, 1779.

I HAVE received this moment from your bookseller, Sir, the valuable present of the second volume of your "Annals," and beg leave to return you my grateful thanks for so agreeable a gift, of which I can only have taken a look enough to lament that you do not intend to continue the work. Repeated and severe attacks of the gout forbid my entertaining visions of pleasures to come; but though I might

[1] For the cure of a disgusting disease.—WALPOLE.

not have the advantage of your labours, Sir, I wish too well to posterity not to be sorry that you check your hand.

Lord Buchan did me the honour lately of consulting me on portraits of illustrious Scots. I recollect that there is at Windsor a very good portrait of your countryman Duns Scotus,[1] whose name struck me on just turning over your volume. A good print was made from that picture some years ago, but I believe it is now very scarce: as it is not worth while to trouble his Lordship with another letter for that purpose only, may I take the liberty, Sir, of begging you to mention it to his Lordship?

1802. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, March 22, 1779.

If your representative dignity is impaired westward, you may add to your eastern titles those of 'Rose of India' and 'Pearl of Pondicherry.' The latter gem is now set in one of the vacant sockets of the British diadem.

I have nothing to subjoin to this high-flown paragraph, that will at all keep pace with the majesty of it. I should have left to the Gazette to wish you joy, nor have begun a new letter without more materials, if I did not fear you would be still uneasy about your nephew. I hear he has, *since his parenthesis*, voted again with the Court; therefore he has probably not taken a new *part*, but only made a Pindaric transition on a particular question. I have seen him but twice since his arrival, and from both those visits I had no reason to expect he would act differently from what you wished. Perhaps it may never happen again. I go so little into the world, that I don't at all know what company he frequents. He talked so reasonably and tenderly with regard to you, that I shall be much deceived if he often gives you any inquietude.

The place of Secretary of State is not replenished yet. Several different successors have been talked of. At least, at present, there is a little chance of its being supplied by the Opposition. Their numbers have fallen off again, though they are more alert than they used to be. I do not love to foretell, because no Elijah left me his mantle, in which, it seems, the gift of prophecy resides; and, if I

[1] Now at Hampton Court. As Duns Scotus died in 1308, the picture is not a contemporary portrait, but a *Holyrood* manufacture.—Cunningham.

see clouds gathering, I less care to announce their contents to foreign post-offices. On the other hand, it is no secret, nor one to disguise if it were, that the French trade must suffer immensely by our captures.

Private news I know none. The Bishops are trying to put a stop to one staple commodity of that kind, Adultery. I do not suppose that they expect to lessen it; but, to be sure, it was grown to a sauciness that did call for a decenter veil. I do not think they have found out a good cure; and I am of opinion, too, that flagrancy proceeds from national depravity, which tinkering one branch will not remedy. Perhaps polished manners are a better proof of virtue in an age than of vice, though system-makers do not hold so: at least, decency has seldom been the symptom of a sinking nation.

When one talks on general themes, it is a sign of having little to say. It is not that there is a dearth of topics; but I only profess sending you information on events that really have happened, to guide you towards forming a judgment. At home, we are fed with magnificent hopes and promises that are never realised. For instance, to prove discord in America, Monsieur de la Fayette was said to rail at the Congress, and their whole system and transactions. There is just published an intercourse between them that exhibits enthusiasm in him towards their cause, and the highest esteem for him on their side. For my part, I see as little chance of recovering America as of re-conquering the Holy Land. Still I do not amuse you with visions on either side, but tell you nakedly what advantage has been gained or lost. This caution abbreviates my letters; but, in general, you can depend on what I tell you. Adieu!

Tuesday, 24th.

I hear this moment that an account is come this morning of D'Estaign with sixteen ships being blocked up by Byron at Martinico, and that Rowley with eight more was expected by the latter in a day or two. D'Estaing, it is supposed, will be starved to surrender, and the island too. I do not answer for this intelligence or consequences; but, if the first is believed, you may be sure the rest is.

1803. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, March 28, 1779.

Your last called for no answer; and I have so little to tell you, that I only write to-day to avoid the air of remissness. I came hither on Friday, for this last week has been too hot to stay in London; but March is arrived this morning with his north-easterly malice, and I suppose will assert his old style claim to the third of April. The poor infant apricots will be the victim to that Herod of the almanack. I have been much amused with new travels through Spain by a Mr. Swinburne[1]—at least with the Alhambra, of the inner parts of which there are two beautiful prints. The Moors were the most polished, and had most taste of any people in the Gothic ages; and I hate the knave Ferdinand and his bigoted Queen for destroying them. These new travels are simple, and do tell you a little more than late voyagers, by whose accounts one would think there was nothing in Spain but muleteers and fandangos. In truth there does not seem to be much worth seeing but prospects; and those, unless I were a bird, I would never visit, when the accommodations are so wretched.

Mr. Cumberland has given the town a Masque, called Calypso,[2] which is a prodigy of dulness. Would you believe, that such a sentimental writer would be so gross as to make cantharides one of the ingredients of a love-potion for enamouring Telemachus? If you think I exaggerate, here are the lines:

> To these, the hot Hispanian fly
> Shall bid his languid pulse beat high.

Proteus and Antiope are Minerva's missioners for securing the

[1] "Travels through Spain, in the years 1775 and 1776; in which several Monuments of Roman and Moorish Architecture are illustrated by accurate Drawings taken on the spot. By Henry Swinburne." London, 1779, 4to. Mr. Swinburne also published, in 1783-5, his "Travels in the Two Sicilies, during the Years 1777-8-9, and 1780." This celebrated traveller was the youngest son of Sir John Swinburne, of Capheaton, Northumberland, the long-established seat of that ancient Roman Catholic family. Pecuniary embarrassments, arising from the marriage of his daughter to Paul Benfield, Esq., and consequent involvement in the misfortunes of that adventurer, induced him to obtain a place in the newly-ceded settlement of Trinidad, where he died in 1803.—Wright.

[2] "Calypso" was brought out at Covent-Garden theatre, but was performed only a few nights. It was imprudently ushered in by a prelude, in which the author treated the newspaper editors as a set of unprincipled fellows.—Wright.

prince's virtue, and in recompense they are married and crowned king and queen!

I have bought at Hudson's sale a fine design of a chimney-piece, by Holbein, for Henry VIII.[1] If I had a room left, I would erect. It is certainly not so Gothic as that in my Holbein room; but there is a great deal of taste for that bastard style; perhaps it was executed at Nonsuch.

I do intend, under Mr. Essex's inspection, to begin my Offices next spring. It is late in my day, I confess, to return to brick and mortar; but I shall be glad to perfect my plan, or the next possessor will marry my castle to a Doric stable. There is a perspective through two or three rooms in the Alhambra, that might easily be improved into Gothic, though there seems but small affinity between them; and they might be finished within with Dutch tiles, and painting, or bits of ordinary marble, as there must be gilding. Mosaic seems to be their chief ornaments, for walls, ceilings, and floors. Fancy must sport in the furniture, and mottos might be gallant, and would be very Arabesque. I would have a mixture of colours, but with a strict attention to harmony and taste; and some one should predominate, as supposing it the favourite colour of the lady who was sovereign of the knight's affections who built the house. Carpets are classically Mahometans, and fountains—but, alas! our climate till last summer was never romantic! Were I not so old, I would at least build a Moorish novel—for you see my head runs on Granada—and by taking the most picturesque parts of the Mahometan and Catholic religions, and with the mixture of African and Spanish names, one might make something very agreeable—at least I will not give the hint to Mr. Cumberland. Adieu! Yours ever.

1804. TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

[1779.]

The penetration, solidity, and taste, that made you the first of historians, dear Sir, prevent my being surprised at your being the best writer of controversial pamphlets too.[2] I have read you with

[1] This very fine drawing, which Walpole bought at the sale of Hudson the painter (who had it from his father-in-law, Richardson) was sold at the Strawberry Hill sale for 33*l.* 12*s.*, and is now in the British Museum.—Cunningham.

[2] Gibbon's celebrated "Vindication" of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of his History appeared early in the year 1779.—Wright.

more precipitation than such a work deserved, but I could not disobey you and detain it. Yet even in that hurry I could discern, besides a thousand beauties and strokes of wit, the inimitable eighty-third page, and the conscious dignity that you maintain throughout, over your monkish antagonists. When you are so superior in argument, it would look like insensibility to the power of your reasoning, to select transient passages for commendation; and yet I must mention one that pleased me particularly, from the delicacy of the severity, and from its novelty too; it is, *bold is not the word.* This is the feathered arrow of Cupid, that is more formidable than the club of Hercules. I need not specify thanks, when I prove how much I have been pleased. Your most obliged.

1805. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Bedfordshire, April 8, 1779.

I DID not answer your Ladyship's letter, as I generally do, the moment I received it, because I had nothing to tell you about the remnant of myself, which is the worst subject in the world. I have been six days at Strawberry Hill, and I think the soft south-west did me good; but I have a constant feverish heat that seems to be undermining my ruins; however its progress is very slow; and so if you please we will say no more of it; but your goodness in inquiring is written on my heart's last tablet. Mr. Mason was with me for two days: he is printing the third book of his 'Garden.'

Lord Harrington is gathered to his fathers, or rather, is taken from his *mothers.* Lord Beauchamp's son is well again. Lord Harrington has left my Lady 2500*l.* besides her jointure of 1500*l.* a year; to Lady Anna Maria 6000*l.*; 5000*l.* to Mr. Stanhope, and an estate of 150*l.* a year; but there are so many debts that the legacies are more magnificent than generous. The charming house at St. James's is to be sold; but it is supposed the present earl will purchase it.

This is all I have heard, Madam, since I came to town yesterday, which is perfectly empty; the grass grows in the streets, though nowhere else, for the climate is turned as Asiatic as the government; and it is to be hoped that in time there will be elephants and tigers of our own growth in the Sultan's gardens, to the great satisfaction of Sir William Chambers. I was pleased yesterday to see that, though everything old-fashioned is going out of date, we have still

resources. If our trade decays we have new handycrafts: at Turnham Green I read on a large board—*manufacture of temples.* I suppose the Archbishop of York will set up looms in his diocese for Popish chapels, and Manchester weave dungeons for the Inquisition. The pope's bull against the dissenters' bill is actually issued from the Clarendon printing-house. I was interrupted by the strangest story I ever heard, and which I cannot yet believe, though it is certainly true. Last night as Miss Ray was getting into her coach in Covent Garden from the play, a clergyman shot her through the head, and then himself. She is dead; but he is alive to be hanged—in the room of Sir Hugh Palliser. Now, Madam, can one believe such a tale? How could poor Miss Ray have offended a divine? She was no enemy to the church militant or naval, to the Church of England or the church of Paphos. I do not doubt but it will be found that the assassin was a dissenter, and instigated by the Americans to give such a blow to the state. My servants have heard that the murderer was the victim's husband: methinks his jealousy was very long suffering! "*Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!*" and that he should not have compounded for a deanery! What trials Lord Sandwich goes through! he had better have one for all.

Friday, 9th.

I gave David this letter yesterday, and had forgotten to seal it, which he did not perceive till I was gone out for the evening. Instead of sealing it he kept it for me till this morning after I had written my second. I send both to show I had been punctual, though all the novelty is evaporated, and my intelligence is not worth a farthing more than the newspaper.

April 9, 1779.

Ladies, said a certain philosopher, always tell their minds in the postscript. As that is the habitation of truth, I send you, Madam, a little more truth than there was in my narrative of yesterday, which was warm from the first breath of rumour: yet though this is only a postscript I will not answer for its perfect veracity. It is the most authentic account I have yet been able to collect of so strange a story, of which no doubt you are curious to know more.

The assassin's name is Hackman; he is brother to a reputable tradesman in Cheapside, and is of a very pleasing figure himself, and most engaging behaviour. About five years ago he was an officer in the 66th regiment, and being quartered at Huntingdon, pleased so much as to be invited to the oratorios at Hinchinbrook,

and was much caressed there. Struck with Miss Ray's charms he proposed marriage; but she told him she did not choose to carry a knapsack. He went to Ireland, and there changed the colour of his cloth, and at his return, I think not long ago, renewed his suit, hoping a cassock would be more tempting than a gorget; but in vain. Miss Ray, it seems, has been out of order, and abroad but twice all the winter. She went to the play on Wednesday night for the second time with Galli the singer. During the play the desperate lover was at the Bedford Coffee House, and behaved with great calmness, and drank a glass of capillaire. Towards the conclusion, he sallied into the piazza, waiting till he saw his victim handed by Mr. Macnamara. He came behind her, pulled her by the gown, and on her turning round, clapped the pistol to her forehead, and shot her through the head. With another pistol he then attempted to shoot himself, but the ball only grazing his brow, he tried to dash out his own brains with the pistol, and is more wounded by those blows than by the ball.

Lord Sandwich was at home expecting her to supper at half-an-hour after ten. On her not returning an hour later, he said something must have happened: however, being tired he went to bed at half-an-hour after eleven, and was scarce in bed before one of his servants came in, and said Miss Ray was shot. He stared, and could not comprehend what the fellow meant; nay, lay still, which is full as odd a part of the story as any. At twelve came a letter from the surgeon to confirm the account; and then he was extremely afflicted.

Now, upon the whole, Madam, is not the story full as strange as ever it was? Miss Ray has six children, the eldest son is fifteen, and she was at least three times as much. To bear a hopeless passion, for five years, and then murder one's mistress—I don't understand it! If the story clears up at all, your Ladyship shall have a sequel. These circumstances I received from Lord Hertford, who heard them at Court yesterday from the Lords of the Admiralty. I forgot that the Galli swooned away on the spot.

I do not love tragic events *en pure perte*. If they do happen, I would have them historic. This is only of kin to history, and tends to nothing. It is very impertinent in one Hackman, to rival Herod, and shoot Mariamne—and *that* Mariamne, a kept mistress! and yet it just sets curiosity agog, because she belongs to Lord Sandwich, at a critical moment—and yet he might as well have killed any other inhabitant of Covent Garden.

1806. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, April 12, 1779.

As your gout was so concise, I will not condole on it, but I am sorry you are liable to it if you do but take the air. Thank you for telling me of the vendible curiosities at the Alderman's. For St. Peter's portrait to hang to a fairie's watch, I shall not think of it, both as I do not believe it very like, and as it is composed of invisible writing, for which my eyes are not young enough. In truth, I have almost left off making purchases; I have neither room for anything more, nor inclination for them, as I reckon everything very dear when one has so little time to enjoy it. However, I cannot say but the plates by Rubens do tempt me a little—yet, as I do not care to buy even Rubens in a poke, I should wish to know if the Alderman would let me see if it were but one. Would he be persuaded? I would pay for the carriage, though I should not buy them.

Lord de Ferrers will be infinitely happy with the sight of the pedigree, and I will certainly tell him of it, and how kind you are.

Strype's account, or rather Stow's, of Richard's person is very remarkable—but I have done with endeavouring at truth. Weeds grow more naturally than what one plants. I hear your Cantabrigians are still unshaken Chattertonians. Many men are about falsehood like girls about the first man that makes love to them: a handsomer, a richer, or even a sincerer lover cannot eradicate the first impression—but a sillier swain, or a sillier legend, sometimes gets into the head of the miss or the learned man, and displaces the antecedent folly. Truth's kingdom is not of this world.

I do not know whether our clergy are growing Mahometans or not: they certainly are not what they profess themselves—but as you and I should not agree perhaps in assigning the same defects to them, I will not enter on a subject which I have promised you to drop. All I allude to now is, the shocking murder of Miss Ray by a divine. In my own opinion, we are growing more fit for Bedlam than for Mahomet's paradise. The poor criminal in question, I am persuaded, is mad—and the misfortune is, the law does not know how to define the shades of madness; and thus there are twenty out-pensioners of Bedlam, for one that is confined. You, dear Sir, have chosen a wiser path to happiness by depending on yourself for amusement. Books and past ages draw one into no scrapes, and perhaps it

is best not to know much of men till they are dead. I wish you health—you want nothing else. I am, dear Sir, yours most truly.

1807. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1779.

I AM grieved to hear of your having the rheumatism so acutely in your head. Though it is not dangerous, like the gout, its duration is more fluctuating, and not consistent in a fit. I trust it will be gone long before I hear again; but the suspense will be very uneasy to me, and one of the evils of such great distance.

I was glad to hear your nephew had himself given you an account of his parenthesis of Opposition, as you can speak more freely to him than if you had learnt it only from me. Very uncertain it is when I shall see him again, which I have done but thrice; nor could I expect more from so much younger a man. We live in very different worlds, or rather I live almost out of it, and he quite in it, and yet not where I do. At this time of year, too, I am here half the week. I hope he will give you no more uneasiness; but you must have patience if he does. Nephews and nieces are not very tractable. My own uncle did not find *me* so; and I do not wonder at others. One must wrap one's self up in one's self. People have difficulty enough of conducting their own children—mercy on us, were we to answer for collaterals.

There have been no Parliamentary clouds, because during the holydays there has been no Parliament: but the political horizon does not clear up. I bade you a little expect the conquest of Martinico; but that prospect seems pretty much vanished. If the letters yesterday from France speak truth, our trust in Spain is dispelled likewise: it is said she has declared for the Americans too, and it has been whispered here for these two days:—there is no occasion to comment on that addition to our load!—nor shall I tell you other ugly symptoms. A Spanish war is as much as you can digest at once. If I alarm you on bad grounds, it will make amends for my having vainly promised you Martinico; though I never warrant but what is actually passed.

Though Sir Hugh Palliser's trial has been begun this week, the public does not honour it with the same attention as Keppel's. It does not brighten for the Vice-Admiral.

For the last week all conversation has been engrossed by a shocking

murder, committed on the person of a poor woman connected with a most material personage now on the great stage. You will have seen some mention of it in the papers; I mean the assassination of Miss Ray, Lord Sandwich's mistress, by a clergyman, who had been an officer, and was desperately in love with her, though she is between thirty and forty, and has had nine children. She was allowed to be most engaging; and so was the wretched lover, who had fixed his hopes of happiness on marrying her, and had been refused, after some encouragement; I know not how much. On his trial yesterday he behaved very unlike a madman, and wishes not to live. He is to suffer on Monday, and I shall rejoice when it is over; for it is shocking to reflect that there is a human being at this moment in so deplorable a situation. It would be foolish to repeat that we are a nation of lunatics; yet, with so many outward and visible signs, can one avoid thinking so? Alas! we are likely to undergo sharp purgations, that may bring us to our senses again! The loss of blood has not yet cured us. For the loss of money, it has had but the same effect on the nation as on our youthful gamesters—it has made us more extravagant.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper till Tuesday: perhaps I may be able to contradict the Spanish article.

Tuesday.

No; I do not affirm nor deny: however, nothing is yet public, and I imagine there is still some negotiation going on, as the Spanish Ambassador receives frequent couriers, and writes much.

The poor assassin was executed yesterday. The same day Charles Fox moved for the removal of Lord Sandwich, but was beaten by a large majority; for in Parliament the ministers can still gain victories. Adieu!

1808. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, April 20, 1779.

I HAVE received the plates very safely, but hope you nor the Alderman will take it ill that I return them. They are extremely pretty, and uncommonly well preserved; but I am sure they are not by Rubens, nor I believe after his designs, for I am persuaded they are older than his time. In truth, I have a great many of the same sort, and do not wish for more. I shall send them back on Thursday by the Fly, and will beg you to inquire after them; and I trust they will arrive as safely as they did to, yours ever.

1809. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

April 23, 1779.

I OUGHT not to trouble you so often when you are not well; but that is the very cause of my writing now. You left off abruptly from disorder, and therefore I wish to know it is gone. The plates I hope got home safe. They are pretty, especially the reverses; but the drawing in general is bad.

Pray tell me what you mean by a *priced* catalogue of the pictures at Houghton. Is it a printed one? if it is, where is it to be had? —odd questions from *me*, and which I should not wish to have mentioned as coming from me. I have been told to-day that they are actually sold to the Czarina: *sic transit!* mortifying enough, were not everything transitory! We must recollect that our griefs and pains are so, as well as our joys and glories; and, by balancing the account, a grain of comfort is to be extracted. Adieu! I shall be heartily glad to receive a better account of you.

1810. TO MRS. ABINGTON.

[1779.]

MR. WALPOLE cannot express how much he is mortified that he cannot accept of Mrs. Abington's obliging invitation, as he had engaged company to dine with him on Sunday at Strawberry Hill; whom he would put off, if not foreigners who are leaving England. Mr. Walpole hopes, however, that this accident will not prevent an acquaintance, which his admiration of Mrs. Abington's genius has made him long desire; and which he hopes to cultivate at Strawberry Hill, when her leisure will give him leave to trouble her with an invitation.

1811. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, April 24, 1779.

I BEGIN my letter here, because I am alone and have leisure, of which I cannot be sure in town; and, should I have any sudden news to send, I might not have time to add the trifles I may wish to add.

I met your nephew the other night at the Duchess of Montrose's,[1] and was happy to hear he had received a more recent and better account of you than what you gave me of the rheumatism in your head. I will send you by him bootikins for both hands and feet. I sometimes have rheumatic pains in the shoulder in the evening, and a bootikin on my hand immediately removes it. I should hope it would be as efficacious for the head, should it return thither, contrary to my earnest wishes.

The decision of Spain is not publicly known yet. In France they expect it in their favour.[2] Some here still think it will be a neutrality. Did one judge any longer by the Stocks, the augury would be good. They cannot reasonably have risen, as they have done, on the diminutive success in Georgia, which has not even encouraged the victors to hope to advance, without what they are far from receiving, a reinforcement. Nor are we more prosperous against D'Estaing; nor is the capture of eight or nine Domingomen very beneficial to stockholders: but so much industry is used of late in bolstering up the Stocks, that they are no longer the weather-glass of fortune, but part of the mask employed to disguise the nation's own face to itself.

There has been a motion in each House this week for the removal of Lord Sandwich; but both houses think him as white as snow. Palliser, probably, will be equally blanched. The Howes, on the other hand, will come immaculate out of the furnace: I believe, if the Duchess of Kingston was to return, she might be voted into her old post of Maid of Honour. Lord Lyttelton, who thinks he has talents for Secretary of State, and that want of principles is no impediment (it was not to his being Justice in Eyre), has again turned against the Court on obtaining the Seals. The grass would grow in our Temple of Virtue, if it was the sole vestibule to our Temple of Honours. Governor Johnstone, having had such clumsy success as Ambassador of peace to America, has made his bargain, and is turned into a commodore of a cruising squadron. It is judicious enough, I think, to convert such men as go upon the highway of fortune into privateers; but what a figure do we make in Europe! Unable to raise the sums we want for the war, the members of that Parliament that is told so, are yet occupied in preying on the distresses of the Government! What comments

[1] Lady Lucy Manners, daughter of the Duke of Rutland. Lady Lucy Mann, Sir Horace's wife, was related to her.—WALPOLE.

[2] The looked-for accommodation did not take place.—WALPOLE.

must Dr. Franklin make on every newspaper to the French Ministers!

27th.

I find nothing new in town. Rumours of peace continual. I doubt it is easier for both sides to be sick of the war, than to know how to agree. I doubt, too, that *we* want peace more than we desire it; and, as we must buy it dear, we shall not be so ready to pay the price. It will not be very sincere to the Americans, if we do conclude; and the intentional insincerity often promotes peace, and at least makes the sufferers shut their eyes to their own loss. We have betrayed such propensity to duplicity, that the other side will aggravate the bargain; for, as cunning is no new invention, it is equally in the power of both parties to employ it. Mankind will not remember that honesty cannot be detected.

I should not send away this scrap, and with so little intelligence, if I were not glad to tell you that I am easier about your disorder. I will not write again soon without more substantial news.

1812. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 9, 1779.

An invasion announced by the common post from Paris, attempted, repulsed, given up, and known here: all this has happened in eight days, and in miniature; but it was a large object, and a long and anxious interval to me, for the object was Jersey, Mr. Conway's government, and he went post to defend it. He has no idea of danger, and has the strongest one of doing his duty to a scruple; but I will now be methodical, for *you* want information, not a rhapsody on my sensations.

On the 1st of May, yesterday sevennight, there were forty letters in town that proclaimed an intended attack on Jersey, of fifteen hundred men commanded by a Prince of Nassau, who was to be declared king of the island. A secret expedition advertised with so slender a force, exceeded by the troops on the isle, to say nothing of the ridicule of such a Roi d'Yvetot, did not make much impression: however, Mr. Conway spread his wings, with my approbation; and, on confirmation arriving on Monday, set out that night. It seems the islanders, besides provoking France by their privateers and numerous captures, had imprudently advertised a sale, in August next, of prizes, to the amount of a vast sum, which would have been a kingdom indeed, to a little necessitous Prince. He collected

a small army of vagabonds, like his predecessor Romulus; but who had so little taste for the adventure when its destination was known, that he was forced to select fifty men from his more regular regiment to defend his person against the companions of his armament. It happened that Admiral Arbuthnot, who was going to convoy four thousand recruits to America, had been detained, though probably the French thought him sailed; and, hearing of the invasion, immediately sailed to Jersey, without staying for orders. The attack, however, had been made on the 1st of the month: the French had attempted to land, but Lord Seaforth's new-raised regiment of seven hundred Highlanders, assisted by some militia and some artillery, made a brave stand and repelled the intruders; and, as every *Nassau* does not conquer a British island merely by his presence, the visionary Monarch sailed back to France on the 2nd, and King George and Viceroy Conway remain Sovereign of Jersey—whom God long preserve!

We heard of the repulse on Thursday; but it was not till late in the night of Friday that an account came of the retreat, and I did not learn it till Saturday morning; in which interval there seemed to be twice eight-and-forty hours, and yet I had concluded that the French would be retired before Mr. Conway could reach his dominions. We had reports of the Brest fleet being sailed, and this little episode does look like a feint. Negotiation is said to be at an end or a pause. Arbuthnot's activity, though greatly commendable, is a detrimental delay; and we have reason enough to expect other damage. I did hint to you that we had more thorns than one in our pillow: it is now too publicly known to be disguised any longer, that Ireland has much the air of Americanizing. Our oppressive partiality to two or three manufacturing towns in England has revolted the Irish, and they have entered into combinations against purchasing English goods, in terms more offensive than the first associations of the Colonies. In short, we have for four or five years displayed no alacrity or address, but in provoking our friends and furnishing weapons of annoyance to our enemies; and the unhappy facility with which the Parliament has subscribed to all these oversights has deceived the Government into security, and encouraged it to pull almost the whole fabric on its own head. We can escape but by concessions and disgrace; and, when we attain peace, the terms will prove that Parliamentary majorities have voted away the wisdom, glory, and power of the nation.

The House of Commons has exposed itself wofully these last days

in a less affair. They have refused, voted, unvoted, and revoted an inquiry into the conduct of the war; and all the Generals at the bar have declared the impossibility of conquering America: so, the House has nothing to do to preserve its consequence, but to vote it *shall* still be conquered.

Palliser's trial has ended as shamefully. He is acquitted, *with honour*, of not having obeyed his Admiral's signals: which is termed blameable for not having given the reason why he did not; and that reason was the rottenness of his mast, with which he returned to Portsmouth, without its being repaired yet. The world is expecting his restoration; for, when Keppel risked his own reputation to save Palliser's, ought not the latter to be recompensed for accusing his benefactor? But I am sick of specifying all our ignominy; I wish I had any tittle-tattle of less consequence to fill my letters with. I will go answer yours, and try to forget England, as it has forgotten itself! Oh! but you ask if Byron has beaten D'Estaing and taken Martinico? Not quite; on the contrary, our conquerors are swept away by a mortality in Santa Lucia and in Georgia. Content yourself with privateering; we have no other success.

The Presbyterians of Scotland will not condole with you on the Pope's illness; they forswear him tooth and nail. Mrs. Anne Pitt is confined, and, the last time I heard of her, was very bad. Make many compliments, pray, for me to the House of Lucan; but, between you and me, I am not at all delighted with their intending to bring me a present. I do not love presents, and much less from anybody but very dear friends. That family and I are upon very civil terms; our acquaintance is of modern date, and rather waned than improved. Lady Lucan has an astonishing genius for copying whatever she sees. The pictures I lent her from my collection, and some advice I gave her, certainly brought her talent to marvellous perfection in five months; for before, she painted in crayons, and as ill as any fine lady in England. She models in wax, and has something of a turn towards poetry; but her prodigious vivacity makes her too volatile in everything, and my lord follows wherever she leads. This is only for your private ear. I desire to remain as well as I am with them; but we shall never be more intimate than we are. I am not at all acquainted with your Lord Bishop[1] and my

[1] The Honourable and Reverend Frederick Hervey, in 1767 Bishop of Cloyne, and in 1769 Bishop of Derry. He succeeded his brother Augustus, as fourth Earl of Bristol, in 1779. His wife was the daughter of Sir Jermyn Davers, Bart.—CUNNINGHAM.

lady, his wife. His mother [Lady Hervey], who was much my friend, I believe, did not highly reverence his sincerity; I never in my life met him at her house.

Adieu! my dear Sir. Do not let rumours, good or bad, agitate you. Bear public misfortunes with firmness. Private griefs hurry away our thoughts, and belong solely to ourselves; but we may be excused taking more than our share in general calamities.

1813. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, May 21, 1779.

As Mr. Essex has told me that you still continue out of order, I am impatient to hear from yourself how you are. Do send me a line: I hope it will be a satisfactory one.

Do you know that Dr. Ducarel has published a translation of a 'History of the Abbey of Bec?' There is a pretty print to it: and one very curious circumstance, at least valuable to us disciples of Alma Mater Etonensis. The ram-hunting was derived from the manor of Wrotham in Norfolk, which formerly belonged to Bec, and being forfeited, together with other alien priories, was bestowed by Henry VI. on our college. I do not repine at reading any book from which I can learn a single fact that I wish to know. For the lives of the abbots, they were, according to the author, all pinks of piety and holiness—but there are few other facts amusing, especially with regard to the customs of those savage times—excepting that the Empress Matilda was buried in a bull's hide, and afterwards had a tomb covered with silver.

There is another new book called 'Sketches from Nature,' in two volumes, by Mr. G. Keate, in which I found one fact too, that, if authentic, is worth knowing. The work is an imitation of Sterne, and has a sort of merit, though nothing that arrives at originality. For the foundation of the church of Reculver, he quotes a manuscript said to be written by a Dominican friar of Canterbury, and prseerved at Louvain. The story is evidently metamorphosed into a novel, and has very little of an antique air; but it affirms that the monkish author attests the beauty of Richard III. This is very absurd, if invention has nothing to do with the story; and therefore one should suppose it genuine. I have desired Dodsley to ask Mr. Keate, if there truly exists such a manuscript: if there does, I own I wish he had printed it rather than his own production; for I agree

with Mr. Gray, "that any man living may make a book worth reading, if he will but set down with truth what he has seen or heard, no matter whether the book is well written or not." Let those who can't write, glean.

1814. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington Street, May 22, 1779.

If you hear of us no oftener than we of you, you will be as much behindhand in news as my Lady Lyttelton. We have seen a traveller that saw you in your island,[1] but it sounds like hearing of Ulysses. Well! we must be content. You are not only not dethroned, but owe the safety of your dominions to your own skill in fortification. If we do not hear of your extending your conquests, why, it is not less than all our modern heroes have done, whom prophets have foretold and Gazettes celebrated—or who have foretold and celebrated themselves. Pray be content to be cooped up in an island that has no neighbours, when the Howes and Clintons and Dunmores and Burgoynes and Campbells are not yet got beyond the great river—Inquiry![2] To-day's papers say, that the *little* Prince of Orange[3] is to invade you again; but we trust Sir James Wallace has clipped his wings so close, that they will not grow again this season, though he is so ready to *fly*.

Nothing material has happened since I wrote last—so, as every moment of a civil war is precious, every one has been turned to the interest of diversion. There have been three Masquerades, an Installation, and the ball of the knights at the Haymarket this week; not to mention Almack's festino, Lady Spencer's, Ranelagh and Vauxhall, operas and plays. The Duchess of Bolton too saw masks—so many, that the floor gave way, and the company in the dining-room were near falling on the heads of those in the parlour, and exhibiting all that has not yet appeared in Doctors' Commons. At the knights' ball was such a profusion of strawberries, that people could hardly get into the supper-room. I could tell you more, but I do not love to exaggerate.

[1] Mr. Conway was now at his government of Jersey.—Walpole.

[2] The parliamentary inquiry which took place in the House of Commons on the conduct of the American war.—Walpole.

[3] The Prince of Nassau, who had commanded the attack upon Jersey, claiming relationship to the great house of Nassau, Mr. Walpole calls him the "little Prince of Orange."—Berry.

Lady Ailesbury told me this morning that Lord Bristol has got a calf with two feet to each leg: I am convinced it is by the Duchess of Kingston, who has two of everything where others have but one.[1] Adieu! I am going to sup with Mrs. Abington, and hope Mrs. Clive will not hear of it.

1815. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, May 29, 1779.

I HAVE two letters from you unanswered of the 14th and 15th of this month. I begin to reply to them; though I believe my response will not set out before June for want of corporality. The best news I know is what you tell me of the Spanish Monarch's resolution of remaining neuter. We seem able to cope with France, who makes war in our own piddling style. We both fish for islets that used to escape through the meshes of former military drag-nets. Some attempt on Ireland we expect; I hope the Prince of Nassau will command it. All this last week we were whispered ministerially into a belief of Byron having demolished, taken, and killed D'Estaing and all his squadron. Some doubted whether it was not an artifice to fill the loan; and so it has proved. The two Admirals looked at one another, but did not hurt a pendant of each other's head. The House of Commons sits from day to day, examining into the conduct of all the other Generals and Admirals that have been looking at the Americans and French for these five years, and of the Ministers who sent them to look the Colonies into unlimited submission. Future historians will have a brave collection of papers to revel in.

You shall certainly have my tragedy ['The Mysterious Mother'] when your nephew returns; but I doubt it will shock more than please you, for nothing can be more disgusting than the subject. I approve and exhort you not to preach to your nephew. Wait till you see him, and then you can instil your sentiments by degrees. As he has already corrected many effervescences, I trust to his good sense and good heart for his still improving; but, believe me, there must be a very solid fund to resist the depravation of this country. It is lost, it is distracted. It sinks every day, and yet its extrava-

[1] "Do you know, my lord," said the Duchess, then Miss Chudleigh, to Lord Chesterfield, "the world says I have had twins!" "Does it?" said his lordship; "I make a point of believing only one-half of what it says."—WRIGHT.

gance and dissipation rather augment than subside. Though we have danced like Bacchanals all the winter, there is a new subscription on foot for a sumptuous ball at the Pantheon. We are like the Israelites that capered round the golden calf, though they were to fight their way out of the Desert. I check my hand; it is grievous to condemn one's country! I ask myself, if I am not grown old and splenetic; but alas! America is lost, credit supported by gross falsehoods, all comfort hanging on a King of Spain's mood: one had need be very young to dance without reflection!

May 31st.

I must finish my letter to-night, for I go out of town to-morrow for the summer, and leave the Parliament to give balls or supplies as it pleases. Lord Cornwallis sails to-day to command America, but the fleet is not yet gone. I remember, when I was a boy, hearing that it had been a great joke in Queen Anne's war, that Lord Peterborough was galloping about in Spain inquiring for his army—Lord Cornwallis will have none to hunt for.

The old Duke of Rutland is dead, at eighty-four. I think he had been Knight of the Garter above fifty years.[1]

The Irish do not grow into better humour—I know nothing that is improved but our climate—so, I hope we shall preserve *this part* of the island at least.

P.S. Do not expect me to be so assiduous in summer, as I have been of late; nay, you may wish I should have no occasion to be so.

1816. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 2, 1779.

I AM most sincerely rejoiced, dear Sir, that you find yourself at all better, and trust it is an omen of farther amendment. Mr. Essex surprised me by telling me, that you, who keep yourself so warm and so numerously clothed, do yet sometimes, if the sun shines, sit and write in your garden for hours at a time. It is more than I should readily do, whose habitudes are so very different from yours. Your complaints seem to demand perspiration; but I do not venture to advise. I understand no constitution but my own, and should kill

[1] Yes—from 1722 till his death, in 1779, a period of fifty-seven years. The Duke of Rutland who died in 1856 was Knight of the Garter for nearly the same period. —CUNNINGHAM.

Milo, if I managed him as I treat myself. I sat in a window on Saturday, with the east wind blowing on my neck till near two in the morning; and it seems to have done me good, for I am better within these two days than I have been these six months. My spirits have been depressed, and my nerves so aspen, that the smallest noise disturbed me. To-day I do not feel a complaint; which is something at near sixty-two.

I don't know whether I have not misinformed you, nor am sure it was Dr. Ducarel who translated the account of the Abbey of Bec—he gave it to Mr. Lort; but I am not certain he ever published it. You was the first that notified to me the fifth volume of the Archæologia—I am not much more edified than usual; but there are three pretty prints of Reginal Seals. Mr. Pegge's tedious dissertation, which he calls a brief one, about the foolish legend of St. George, is despicable: all his arguments are equally good for proving the existence of the dragon. What diversion might laughers make of the society! Dolly Pentraeth, the old woman of Mousehole, and Mr. Penneck's nurse, p. 81, would have furnished Foote with two personages for a farce. The same grave dissertation on patriarchal customs seems to have as much to do with British antiquities, as the Lapland witches, that sell wind—and pray what business has the society with Roman inscriptions in Dalmatia! I am most pleased with the account of Nonsuch, imperfect as it is: it appears to have been but a villa, and not considerable for a royal one. You see, lilacs were then a novelty.—Well, I am glad they publish away. The vanity of figuring in these repositories will make many persons contribute their manuscripts, and every now and then something valuable will come to light, which its own intrinsic merit might not have saved.

I know nothing more of Houghton. I should certainly be glad to have the priced catalogue; and if you will lend me yours, my Printer shall transcribe it—but I am in no hurry. I conceive faint hopes, as the sale is not concluded: however, I take care not to flatter myself.

I think I told you I had purchased, at Mr. Ives's sale, a handsome coat in painted glass, of Hobart impaling Boleyn—but I can find no such match in my pedigree—yet I have heard that Blickling [in Norfolk] belonged to Ann Boleyn's father. Pray reconcile all this to me.

Lord de Ferrers is to dine here on Saturday; and I have got to treat him with an account of ancient paintings, formerly in the hall of

Tamworth Castle: they are mentioned in Warton's Observations on the Fairy Queen, vol. i. p. 43.

Do not put yourself to pain to answer this—only be assured I shall be happy to know when you are able to write with ease. You must leave your cloister, if your transcribing leaves you. Believe me, dear Sir, ever most truly.

1817. TO THE REV. DR. LORT.

Strawberry Hill, June 4, 1779.

I AM sorry, dear Sir, you could not let me have the pleasure of your company; but, I own, you have partly, not entirely, made me amends by the sight of your curious manuscript, which I return you, with your other book of inaugurations.

The sight of the manuscript was particularly welcome to me, because the long visit of Henry VI. and his uncle Gloucester to St. Edmund's Bury, accounts for those rare altar tablets that I bought at Mr. Ives's sale, on which are incontestably the portraits of Duke Humphrey, Cardinal Beaufort, and the same archbishop that is in my marriage of Henry VI. I know the house of Lancaster were patrons of St. Edmund's Bury; but so long a visit is demonstration.

The fourth person on my panels is unknown. Over his head is a coat of arms. It may be that of W. Curteys the abbot, or the alderman, as he is in scarlet. His figure and the Duke's are far superior to the other two, and worthy of a good Italian master. The Cardinal and the Archbishop are in the dry hard manner of the age. I wish you would call and look at them; they are at Mr. Bonus's in Oxford-road; the two prelates are much damaged. I peremptorily enjoined Bonus to repair only, and not repaint them; and thus, by putting him out of his way, I have put him so much out of humour too, that he has kept them these two years, and not finished them yet. I design them for the four void spaces in my Chapel, on the sides of the shrine. The Duke of Gloucester's face is so like, though younger, that it proves I guessed right at his figure in my 'Marriage.' The tablets came out of the Abbey of Bury: were procured by old Peter Le Neve, Norroy; and came by his widow's marriage to Tom Martin, at whose sale Mr. Ives bought them. We have very few princely portraits so ancient, so authentic, and none so well painted as the Duke and fourth person. These were the insides of the doors,

which I had split into two, and value them extremely. This account, I think, will be more satisfactory to you than notes.

Pray tell me how you like the pictures when you have examined them. I shall search in Edmondson's new Vocabulary of Arms for the coat, which contains three bulls' heads on six pieces; but the colours are either white and black, or the latter is become so by time. I hope you are not going out of town yet; I shall probably be there some day in next week.

I see advertised a book something in the way of your inaugurations, called Le Costume; do you know anything of it? Can you tell me who is the author of the 'Second Anticipation' on the Exhibition? Is it not Barry the painter?

1818. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Saturday, June 5, 1779.

I WRITE to you more seldom than I am disposed to do, from having nothing positive to tell you, and from being unwilling to say and unsay every minute something that is reported positively. The confident assertions of the victory over D'Estaing are totally vanished; and they who invented them, now declaim as bitterly against Byron, as if he had deceived them—as they did against Keppel. This day se'nnight there was a great alarm about Ireland; which was far from being all invention, though not an absolute insurrection, as was said. The case, I believe, was this:—The Court, in order to break the volunteer army established by the Irish themselves, endeavoured to persuade a body in Lady Blayney's county of Monaghan to enlist in the Militia—which they took indignantly. They said they had great regard for Lady Blayney and Lord Clermont; but to act under them, would be acting under the King, and that was by no means their intention. There have since been motions for inquiries what steps the Ministers have taken to satisfy the Irish—and these they have imprudently rejected—which will not tend to pacification. The Ministers have been pushed, too, on the article of Spain, and could not deny that all negotiation is at an end—though they will not own farther. However, the Spanish ambassador is much out of humour. From Paris they write confidently of the approaching declaration;[1] and Lord Sandwich, I hear, has said in a very mixed

[1] On the breaking out of the war between this country and America, Spain had offered to mediate between them; but receiving a refusal, she at once declared herself a principal in the war, and ready to fulfil the terms of the family compact.—WRIGHT.

company: that it was folly not to expect it. There is another million asked, and given on a vote of credit; and Lord North has boasted of such mines for next year, that one would think he believed next year would never come.

The inquiry[1] goes on, and Lord Harrington did himself and Burgoyne honour. Barré and Governor Johnstone have had warm words,[2] and Burke has been as frantic for the Roman Catholics as Lord George Gordon against them. The Parliament, it is said, is to rise on the 21st.

You will not collect from all this that our prospect clears up. I fear there is not more discretion in the treatment of Ireland than of America. The Court seems to be infatuated, and to think that nothing is of any consequence but a majority in Parliament—though they have totally lost all power but that of provoking. Fortunate it had been for the King and kingdom, had the Court had no majority for these six years! America had still been ours!—and all the lives and all the millions we have squandered! A majority that has lost thirteen provinces by bullying and vapouring, and the most childish menaces, will be a brave countermatch for France and Spain, and a rebellion in Ireland! In short, it is plain that there is nothing a majority in Parliament can do, but outvote a minority; and yet by their own accounts one would think they could not do even that. I saw a paper t'other day that began with this Iriscism, "As the minority have lost us thirteen provinces," &c. I know nothing the minority have done, or been suffered to do, but restore the Roman Catholic religion—and that too was by the desire of the Court.

This is, however, the present style. They announced with infinite applause a new production of Tickell:—it has appeared, and is a most paltry performance. It is called the 'Cassette Verte' of M. de Sartine, and pretends to be his correspondence with the Opposition. Nay, they are so pitifully mean as to laugh at Dr. Franklin, who has such thorough reason to sit and laugh at them. What triumph it must be to him to see a miserable pamphlet all the revenge they can take! There is another, still duller, called 'Opposition Mornings,' in which you are lugged in. In truth, it is a compliment to any man to except him out of the number of those that have con-

[1] The inquiry into the conduct of the American war.—WALPOLE.

[2] In the course of a debate in the House of Commons, on the 3rd of June, Governor Johnstone told Colonel Barré, that he was making a scaramouch of himself. The Colonel got up to demand an explanation, but the Speaker put an end to the altercation.—WRIGHT.

tributed to the shocking disgraces inflicted on this undone country! When Lord Chatham was Minister, he never replied to abuse but by a victory.

I know no private news: I have been here ever since Tuesday, enjoying my tranquillity, as much as an honest man can do who sees his country ruined. It is just such a period as makes philosophy wisdom. There are great moments when every man is called on to exert himself—but when folly, infatuation, delusion, incapacity, and profligacy fling a nation away, and it concurs itself, and applauds its destroyers, a man who has lent no hand to the mischief, and can neither prevent nor remedy the mass of evils, is fully justified in sitting aloof and beholding the tempest rage, with silent scorn and indignant compassion. Nay, I have, I own, some comfortable reflections. I rejoice that there is still a great continent of Englishmen who will remain free and independent, and who laugh at the impotent majorities of a prostitute Parliament. I care not whether General Burgoyne and Governor Johnstone cross over and figure in, and support or oppose; nor whether Mr. Burke, or the superior of the Jesuits, is high commissioner to the kirk of Scotland. My ideas are such as I have always had, and are too plain and simple to comprehend modern confusions; and, therefore, they suit with those of few men. What will be the issue of this chaos, I know not, and, probably shall not see. I do see with satisfaction, *that what was meditated* has failed by the grossest folly; and when one has escaped the worst, lesser evils must be endured with patience.

After this dull effusion, I will divert you with a story that made me laugh this morning till I cried. You know my Swiss, David, and his incomprehensible pronunciation. He came to me, and said, "Auh! dar is Meses Ellis wants some of your large flags to put in her great O." With much ado, I found out that Mrs. Ellis had sent for leave to take up some flags out of my meadow for her grotto.

I hope in a few days to see Lady Ailesbury and Miss Jennings here; I have writ to propose it. What are your intentions? Do you stay till you have made your island impregnable? I doubt it will be our only one that will be so.

1819. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1779.

Your Countess was here last Thursday, and received a letter from you, that told us how slowly you receive ours. When you will re-

ceive this I cannot guess; but it dates a new era, which you with reason did not care to look at as possible. In a word, behold a Spanish war! I must detail a little to increase your wonder. I heard here the day before yesterday that it was likely; and that night received a letter from Paris, telling me (it was of the 6th) that Monsieur de Beauveau was going, they knew not whither, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, with three lieutenant-generals and six or eight maréchaux-de-camp under him. Yesterday I went to town, and Thomas Walpole happened to call on me. He, who used to be informed early, did not believe a word either of a Spanish war or a French expedition. I saw some other persons in the evening as ignorant. At night I went to sup at Richmond-house. The Duke said the Brest fleet was certainly sailed, and had got the start of ours by twelve days; that Monsieur de Beauveau was on board with a large sum of money, and with white and *red* cockades; and that there would certainly be a Spanish war. He added, that the Opposition were then pressing in the House of Commons to have the Parliament continue sitting, and urging to know if we were not at the eve of a Spanish war; but the Ministers persisted in the prorogation for to-morrow or Friday, and would not answer on Spain.

I said I would make you wonder. But no; why should the Parliament continue to sit? Are not the Ministers and the Parliament the same thing? And how has either House shown that it has any talent for war?

The Duke of Richmond does not guess whither the Brest fleet is gone. He thinks, if to Ireland, we should have known it by this time. He has heard that the Prince of Beauveau has said he was going on an expedition that would be glorious in the eyes of posterity. I asked, if that might not mean Gibraltar? The Duke doubts, but hopes it, as he thinks it no wise measure on their side; yet he was very melancholy, as you will be, on this heavy accession to our distresses.

Well! here we are, *aris et focis* and all at stake! What can we be meaning? Unable to conquer America before she was assisted—scarce able to keep France at bay—are we a match for both, and Spain too? What can be our view? nay, what can be our expectation? I sometimes think we reckon it will be more creditable to be forced by France and Spain to give up America, than to have the merit with the latter of doing it with grace.—But, as Cato says,

I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them;

that is, the sword:—and never, I believe, did a country plunge itself into such difficulties step by step, and for six years together, without once recollecting that each foreign war rendered the object of the civil war more unattainable; and that in both the foreign wars we have not an object in prospect. Unable to recruit our remnant of an army in America, are we to make conquests on France and Spain? They may choose their attacks: we can scarce choose what we will defend.

Ireland, they say, is more temperate than was expected. That is some consolation—yet many fear the Irish will be tempted to unite with America, which would throw all that trade into their convenient harbours: and I own I have apprehensions that the Parliament's rising without taking a step in their favour may offend them. Surely at least we have courageous Ministers. I thought my father a stout man:—he had not a tithe of their spirit.

The town has wound up the season perfectly in character by a fête at the Pantheon by subscription. Le Texier managed it; but it turned out sadly. The company was first shut into the galleries to look down on the supper, then let to descend to it. Afterwards they were led into the subterraneous apartment, which was laid with mould, and planted with trees, and crammed with nosegays: but the fresh earth, and the dead leaves, and the effluvia of breaths made such a stench and moisture, that they were suffocated; and when they remounted, the legs and wings of chickens and remnants of ham (for the supper was not removed) poisoned them more. A druid in an arbour distributed verses to the ladies; then the Baccelli[1] and the dancers of the Opera danced; and then danced the company; and then it being morning, and the candles burnt out, the windows were opened; and then the stewed-danced assembly were such shocking figures, that they fled like ghosts as they looked.—I suppose there will be no more balls unless the French land, and then we shall show we do not mind it.

Thus I have told you all I know. You will ponder over these things in your little distant island, when we have forgotten them. There is another person, one Dr. Franklin, who, I fancy, is not sorry that we divert ourselves so well.

[1] After the departure of Mademoiselle Heinel, no dancing so much delighted the frequenters of the Opera as that of Mademoiselle Baccelli and M. Vestris le jeune.—Wright.

820. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1779.

Alas! my dear Sir, you have been mistaken, and must no more put your trust in the obstinacy of Princes: at least, that of one can surmount that of another. The King of Spain's rescript is arrived and delivered, and the Brest fleet is sailed with both white and red cockades. The declaration is said not to be very injurious; but, after all possible endeavours at pacification, his Catholic Majesty is obliged to take his part, especially as we have made some captures on his subjects. The Ministers were urged even late last night on the hostility of Spain, but would own nothing. This morning they avow everything; and, to your great surprise probably, the Parliament is to rise to-morrow or next day! As events have not proved the wisdom of measures, one can collect no great confidence from such a step: but I don't pretend to reason on what I do not understand; my business is to tell you facts. In short, the Brest fleet has been sailed many days. The Prince of Beauveau[1]—if destined for Ireland, we should probably have heard it by this time; if to meet the Spanish fleet, the object might be Gibraltar.

I shall not boast of having been a better soothsayer than you, when I foretold that the American war would not be of short duration. It is a *triste* honour to be verified a prophet of woes. Were I vain of the character, a Spanish war, added to an American one, were a fine field; but I do not ambition being a Jeremiah, though my countrymen are so like the Jews. Nor does it require inspiration to prophesy, when one has nothing to do but to calculate. Were you here, you would not be alarmed. You would see no panic; you would hear of nothing but diversions. The Ministers affirm the majority of America is with us, and it is credited. Were they to tell us half the Spanish fleet would come over to us, it would be credited too. When it does not, perhaps they will tell us it has. —Well! what is most to be dreaded is the dissipation of our delusion. When the *réveil* comes, it will be serious indeed!

You see I am not likely to be barren of matter, and you will be sorry that I write oftener than I foresaw. The middle period of our correspondence was the most agreeable. Its early part was the journal of a civil war, and of no glorious one in Flanders. Fifteen

[1] He did not go.—Walpole.

years after, I sent you victory upon victory, and conquest upon conquest. For the last five years, my letters have been the records of a mouldering empire. What is now to come I know not: we have, they say, maintained ourselves against France and Spain; true, but with the trifling difference of having America in our scale —now it is in theirs. We had too a Lord Chatham; who does not seem to have been replaced.

I tell you nothing of Parliamentary debates, for I really do not attend to them; especially not to the details of the war, and the conduct of the Generals, who have made a very silly figure. There are far mightier objects in question than speeches and votes, and which I *must* learn even here, quiet and abstracted as I sit. My consolation is that I have no particular friend responsible for anything that has happened; and, when one's passions are not concerned, an individual of my age must have learnt to look on the great drama of the world with some indifference. My pride, I own, made me pleased when my country was the most splendid in Europe: I did not imagine I was so singular as I find I was, or we should not have run wild after a phantom of absolute power over a country whose liberty was the source of our greatness. A pretty experiment we have made; and, whenever the hour of peace shall arrive, we shall be able to compute what it has cost us *not* to compass it.

Methinks, if the accounts of all wars were to be stated, it would be worth ambition's while to examine the sum total, and calculate whether the object aimed at is not ten thousand times too dear. I doubt I must not propose examining the mere *cash* account. The lives, alas! go for nothing. We have sent fifty thousand men to America, and recruits! How many will ever return? And where are all the children that would have been begotten in six years of peace? Oh! and now here is a new account to be opened!

These would be called at present the gloomy speculations of a solitary man. Posterity would think there was some sense in them —and yet posterity will perhaps be as foolish on some other point. We condemn the wars of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, and do not conceive what they quarrelled about; yet we, who are at war with France and Spain because we would not be content to let America send us half the wealth of the world in its own way, shall not be deemed very wise hereafter. We not only killed the hen that laid a golden egg every day, but must defend the very shop at home where we sold our eggs.—I have nothing more to say, and three

parts of England do not yet think there is a word of sense in what I have said: France and Spain know there is; but I shall not canvass for their approbation.

1821. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 22, 1779.

Your Ladyship's reproaches would be very just, if my pleas of excuse were not too valid. I have been in town but one half day since I had the honour of seeing you; and my own pastime is too insipid to send you. I have a more weighty apology too to urge, which increases every day, and which I will give you in the moving words of one, almost my contemporary, Dan Lydgate, who in his last piece complains of his trembling joints, and declares that age having benumbed his faculties, had deprived him of *all the subtyltè of curious makyng in Englysshe to endyte.*

You will think me torpid indeed, Madam, when I tell you that I have not set my foot in London even since the delivery of the Spanish Ambassador's sour rescript.

In truth I concluded the eruption of a third war would call Lord Ossory to town; and then I knew your Ladyship would have more authentic intelligence than I could send you by rebound.

The ruin of my country is certainly no matter of joy to me. Perhaps I have long thought it undone; and then one may be allowed to prefer one mode to another. A nation cannot perish entirely. Foreign enemies seldom destroy a country, and then only by total conquest. In my opinion the subversion of a happy constitution, which is only effected by domestic enemies, is a worse evil, certainly a more permanent and more mortifying one, than defeats by strangers. If calamities restore the spirit of our constitution, which had exalted us from a little trading island to the rank of a great empire, we may be a mighty people once more; for it is liberty alone, not titular authority and prerogative, that can aggrandise small countries. If we will be emperors, it will be without empire. The majesty of the people of England was no joke—for they maintained their dignity; but a grand seignior of this diminutive islet, without its trade, which is never an appendage of despotism, would be crushed amidst the real potentates that now exist in Europe; and two of their majesties seem to think the hour is come for sweeping us from the roll of monarchs.

These are not professions, but have always been my opinions, Madam. I think the national character lost, or we should not be where we are at this moment, trusting to precedents of former miracles for preservation; but miracles are not such matters of chance, as to contradict calculation. Only Turks believe that fools are inspired. If Providence interposes its Omnipotence in politics, at least it selects wise men for its agents; or if not wise men, a genius. I sit here, waiting till the star appears that is to conduct those sages. I know not from what quarter, east, west, or south, they are to come. I am sure they have not set out from the north. My utmost wish, not my expectance, is to live to see my country escape tolerably from this menacing darkness. I am too inconsiderable to give advice, and too old to contribute anything else; and therefore sit silently here awaiting the working of the tempest: shipwreck or miracles are soon learnt anywhere.

I have wandered beyond my intention, but you set my pen a prating, though I have told it I will have it hold its tongue. My private story is very brief. My health is much better for quiet and total idleness, and my fevers gone. Lady Aylesbury and Lady William Campbell passed one night here, and last week the Duke of Richmond and the Duchess of Leinster dined with me. On Friday I dined at Princess Amelie's, and was so unfortunate, to my confusion, as to arrive after she was set down to table, but as her Royal Highness had a great cold, I took occasion to go and inquire after her the next day, and made my submission. There were the Duchess of Bedford, their Ladyships Aylesbury, Holdernesse, Mary Coke, Margaret Compton, Anne Howard, Betty Delme, Mrs. Howe, Lords Hertford and Dillon, Lords Pelham and Edgcumbe, and their wives, and Mr. Morrice, who looked dreadfully ill indeed.

I hear Lord Carlisle has resigned, and conjecture why; and that Lord Shelburne is going to be married—perhaps your Ladyship knows to whom: unless you tell me to the contrary, I shall be very glad.

Shall I make you smile, Madam, in this ugly hour? You know my Swiss David's solemnity and uncouth pronunciation, which he thinks perfect. He came into my room t'other day very composedly and dangling his arms said, "Auh! dar is Meses Ellis want some of your large flags to put in her great O."—I cried, what! though I could scarce question him for laughing. At last with much ado, I discovered that Mrs. Ellis's wants lay in her grotto.

That beautiful spot, Mr. Hindley's, is to be sold by auction next Monday. I hear Mrs. Coke, the mother of him of Norfolk, intends

to be the purchaser—and I hope so: for I do not know her, which is a good circumstance in a next neighbourhood; and a dowager is a quiet sort of neighbour, and don't keep hounds. I pray for the peace of my little Jerusalem, since I have long been cured of having any other object.

Wednesday noon.

I had sealed my letter for the post, when I received your Ladyship's second, for which I give you a million of thanks. I am delighted with the confirmation of Lady Louisa's match.[1] My acquaintance with Lord Shelburne is very slight; but two essential points are gospel, that he is a man of sense, and that he made an excellent husband to a wife far inferior to Lady Louisa in beauty.[2] There is a third, which though negative, I reckon a capital merit at present, he is not a gamester.

George Selwyn is suddenly returned, and as Lord Ossory is in town too, I think I shall go to town to-morrow.

1822. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1779.

This letter will be of very ancient date when you receive it, and not have one very near it perhaps when it sets out. Your nephew called here two days ago, just as I was going to town on business, and told me, to my joy on your account, that he was going in a fortnight to make you another short visit—a very meritorious one when the journey is so long. He has promised to come and dine here *tête-à-tête* before he goes; but, lest he should surprise me, I prepare this, which therefore shall not contain news that would be antiquated, but give you as just a picture as I can in few words of our situation and prospect, and as impartial one as I can, considering my indignation at the ruin brought upon my country by both as worthless and incapable a set of men as ever had the front to call themselves politicians. They have hurried us, and then blundered us, into a civil war, a French war, a Spanish war. America is lost; Jamaica, the West Indian islands, Gibraltar, and Port Mahon, are

[1] Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick (Lord Ossory's sister) married, 8 July, 1779, William Fitzmaurice, Earl of Shelburne, by whom she was mother of the present (1857) Marquis of Lansdowne.—Cunningham.

[2] Carteret, Lord Granville's daughter by his second wife, the Sophia Fermor of Walpole's Letters.—Cunningham.

scarcely to be saved; Ireland is in great danger, either from invasion or provocation.

Of this country I should have little fear, if men who conducted themselves so wretchedly were not still our governors! We are at this instant expecting a sea-battle between our fleet and the united one of France and Spain; in which, if the latter, who are the stronger by a matter of nine ships, have the decided advantage, we conclude they will pour in troops, considerably into Ireland,—here probably in less detachments, to distract us. The nation is not so much alarmed as might be expected. What is infinitely more astonishing is, that the Spanish war, on which the Ministers lulled the country asleep even *till two days* before the declaration, has not excited general, scarcely any, indignation against the criminals. In short, the Court, aided by the Tories and clergy, the worst Tories, have infatuated the nation; and though the Opposition have yearly, daily, hourly, laboured to prevent, and foretold every individual step that has happened, the money of the Treasury, the industry of the Scotch, and the rancour of the Tories have persuaded the majority of the people that the Opposition have almost conjured up the storm; though they have not been strong enough to carry a single question, have deprecated every measure pursued, and have had every one of their prophecies verified.—I, who affirm all this, and appeal to facts, am still not partial to the Opposition. So far from thinking they have gone too far, I know they have been too inert, and, early at least in the American war, might have stemmed some of the torrent. Yet I will do them justice,—the fairness of their character checked them; a less conscientious Opposition might have saved the nation.

In this predicament then we stand; a good man scarcely knows what to wish. New misfortunes would level us to the dust. Success in such hands as we are in, would blow them up to the *acmè* of insolence; and, as the whole scope of all our errors was despotism, it is greatly to be feared that, with the loss of our outlying dominions, our trade, influence, and credit, we might lose our freedom too.

There is the true secret. Prerogative has been whispered into the nation's ear, and taken root. The Tories scruple not to call for it. The Ministers, worthless and incapable wretches, and ill-connected with each other, and cohering from common danger, have little or no credit with their Master; and, no one being predominant, no particular odium rests on any one. Thus, though I am persuaded

almost every one condemns the measures he promotes, and must have foreseen the precipice, not one has had the honest courage to withstand the Spanish war; which I firmly believe was by no means the Spanish King's intention, but turned solely on the refusal of the Closet to relinquish American dependence. Everything has been risked rather than waive prerogative; and so abandoned are the higher orders, that, for the emolument of salaries, they have staked their children and the future security of their estates!

Our late prodigious wealth, and our dissipation, have concurred to facilitate this delusion. We have excellent orators both in the Administration and Opposition, but no great man; and few, very few, virtuous men, even in the latter; who, though impudently charged still with acting from interested motives, have over and over rejected every offer of advantage. I mean, personally. Anything would have been granted to divide them. You will say, good sense, not integrity, checked their acceptance. Perhaps so: yet, as the Court would never have changed its system, nor would part with the lead; it is plain the Opposition did not attend to individual lucre, as every Minister had been gained by it. I believe that neither Lord Rockingham nor Lord Shelburne would be content without being first Minister; but honesty must have been the motive of the rest.

This, though short, is a comprehensive abstract of my ideas on our situation. I cannot precisely say what I wish; because I cannot decide between contradictions, nor can expect that miracles should *dove-tail* themselves in such a manner, as, by intersecting one another, to form a compact establishment. Thus my fears and hopes are suspended, and I sit with folded arms waiting events. It would be idle and impertinent to say this but to you, my dear Sir, who wish to know my opinion, when I could speak it fairly and truly. I have done so most religiously; I firmly believe every tittle I have uttered. Never have I deceived you knowingly. I mean, when I have written by a safe hand—by the post, one colours over some things, even because one's letters may be opened by foreign enemies; but I have ever been rather too frank for my own interest, and have never talked seriously contrary to my opinion, though I may not have uttered it fully. I wish you to return me this letter by your nephew: it is too explicit to be exposed to any hazard of publication, and is impartial enough to please no set of men upon earth.

Pray send me back by your nephew what other letters, too, you

have of mine. On perusing the whole series, I can safely repeat, that, as far as I knew at the time, I have never given you false information, nor acted sentiments which you afterwards found had not been mine; but, as my life has been uniform to its first and only principles, it was not likely that I should go farther than being prudent (not the colour of my character), and, had I talked differently, my conduct at the very time would have contradicted my assertions.

1823. TO GEORGE HARDINGE, ESQ.[1]

Strawberry Hill, July 4, 1779.

I HAVE received the drawings of Grignan, and know not how to express my satisfaction and gratitude but by a silly witticism in the style of some of the quaint novels of the last age:—they are so much more beautiful than I expected, that I am *not* surprised at *your* having surprised me by exceeding even what I expected from your well-known kindness to me.

They are charmingly executed, and with great taste. I own too that Grignan is grander, and in a much finer situation, than I had imagined; as I concluded that the witchery of Madame de Sévigné's ideas and style had spread the same leaf-gold over *places* with which she gilded all her *friends*.

All that has appeared of *them* since the publication of her letters has lowered them. A single letter of her daughter, that to Paulina, with a description of the Duchess of Bourbon's toilette, is alone worthy of the mother. Paulina's own letters contain not a tittle worth reading; one just divines that she might have written well if she had had anything to write about (which, however, would not have signified to her grandmother).

Coulanges was a silly good-humoured glutton, that flattered a rich widow for her dinners. His wife was sensible, but dry, and rather peevish at growing old. Unluckily nothing more has come to light of Madame de Sévigné's son, whose short letters in the collection I am almost *profane* enough to prefer to his mother's; and which makes me astonished that she did not love his wit, so unaffected, and so congenial to her own, in preference to the eccentric and sophisticated reveries of her sublime and ill-humoured daughter. Grignan alone maintains its dignity, and

[1] The Welsh Judge. He died in 1816.—CUNNINGHAM.

shall be consecrated here among other monuments of that bewitching period, and amongst which one loves to lose oneself, and drink oblivion of an era so very unlike; for the awkward bigots to despotism of our time have not Madame de Sévigné's address, nor can paint an Indian idol with an hundred hands as graceful as the Apollo of the Belvidere.

When will you come and accept my thanks? will Wednesday next suit you? But do you know that I must ask you not to leave your gown behind you, which indeed I never knew you to put on willingly, but to come in it. I shall want your protection in Westminster Hall against the Bishops, an odious race whether clerical or laic. You heard how infamously I had been treated by Colonel and by Ned Bishop. Oh! they could not be worse if they were in orders.[1]

1824. TO GEORGE SELWYN, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1779

I TAKE the liberty, which I know you will forgive me, my dear Sir, of troubling you with the enclosed, begging that you will add anything that is necessary to the direction,—as *par la Hollande*, or whatever else is requisite,—and to put it into the post as soon as you receive it. Pray tell me, too, what is necessary to the direction, and where my maid in town must put in my future letters to Paris, that I may not trouble you any more with them. I fear they will not go so safely and regularly as in the old way, which will vex our good old friend [Madame du Deffand], who cannot bear to lose any of her stated occupations.

I have just received a present of four beautiful drawings of Grignan, which far exceed my ideas of its magnificence and charm-

[1] Mr. Hardinge sent this letter to Miss Seward (the Muse of Lichfield), who thus acknowledges the receipt of it:—"The letter you sent me of Horace Walpole's is brilliant, and, from its subject, inevitably interesting; but do not expect that I can learn to esteem that fastidious and unfeeling being, to whose insensibility we owe the extinction of the greatest poetic luminary [Chatterton], if we may judge from the brightness of its dawn, that ever rose in our, or perhaps any other hemisphere. This fine wit of Strawberry Hill, is of that order of mortals who swarm, always swarmed, and always will swarm in refined states; whose eyes of admiration are in their backs, and who, consequently, see nothing worthy their attention before, or on either side of them; and who, therefore, weary, sicken, and disgust people whose sensibilities are strong and healthy, by their eternal cant about the great *have beens*, and the little *ares*."—*Miss Seward to Hardinge, Nov.* 21, 1787. From this letter ('Seward's Letters,' i., 370) I have corrected and enlarged the letter as hitherto printed in Walpole's Correspondence.'—CUNNINGHAM.

ing situation. I had concluded that Madame de Sévigné, either from partiality or to please the Seigneur, had exceeded its pomps and command. I long to show them to you and talk them over, and am glad to have anything new that may tempt you hither. Can you tell me if the Duchess of Leinster still goes to Aubigny; and, if she does, when; and if she is in London? I shall be much obliged to you for a true account of Lord Bolingbroke. It is not common curiosity that makes me anxious, though not particularly interested about him, nor is he *the husband* I most wish dead.

H. W.

1825. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Bedfordshire, July 6, 1779.

I SHOULD not have waited to owe you a letter, Madam, had I not had a substantial reason for silence. I had the gout in my foot for two days at the beginning of last week: it went off at once, but at night came into my left eye; and remained there for four or five days. To what part Old Truepenny, like the ghost in Hamlet, will shift its quarters next, I cannot tell; but I see it will never quit me till it makes a ghost of Horatio. In the mean time it lays such an embargo on me that I never dare engage myself, or promise anything that I am to perform personally, lest I seem capricious; but I am so much worse company than usual, when I am not well, and struggle to hide it, that I determine never to bind myself for a minute but conditionally.

I have done talking politics, Madam, as I should if I lived at the foot of Vesuvius and the mountain grumbled. If the lava takes a contrary direction, and my cottage escapes, I will look about me and see what is left. How can you mind what passes in Parliament? The vestry at Ampthill is of as much consequence. Nothing happens there but contradictions. I observe the Speech gives the lie to all the late assertions of hopes in America, of which it speaks dolefully. I do not think your neighbour so much in the wrong in apprehending a rebellion if Lord North was turned out. The nation would be consequent in resenting it; in short, I believe I am really Xo Ho, a Chinese that comprehends nothing he sees or hears.

Pray let me know when you come to your wedding, that I may get a peep of you. Of weddings in my own tribe I am as tired as of politics and have put cotton into all my ears. Be the events of Empress Chance obeyed; nobody but her majesty has any decision.

I leave everything to her, have abandoned all my principles, and am governed by nothing but *De par la Reine*.

George [Selwyn?] I have seen. He embarked in an instant on receiving a warrant to carry off his prize, as if she had been the heiress of the Indies and he had feared a retractation. I did not ask to see her. Would you ask to see the Moon, if Endymion told you he had married her?

Lord Bolingbroke, I hear, will live. At first they thought he had taken laudanum. It would have been a monstrous injustice in opium to kill him, when it will not despatch Beauclerk.

In my neighbourhood there is no talk of the fleets. All we think of is the new tax on post-horses, which they say will produce more disturbances than the ballot for the militia would have done, and a million of broken heads.

I suppose that was the object (as it seems to be of all our measures) and that as the demand for plaisters will be infinitely increased, it may furnish pretext for a heavy gabel on diachylum. Adieu! Madam, if we are digged out alive, when the conflagration is over, we will chat over old times. I do not desire to embark like Pliny, and probe the nature of earthquakes.

P.S. Harold, my venerable cat that was found on the Goodwin Sands, fifteen years ago or more, died last night in a good old age. I am not grieved, for I have not strength to have carried him out of Troy like Anchises on my shoulders.

1826. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1779.

How much larger the war will be for the addition of Spain, I do not know. Hitherto it has produced no events but the shutting of our ports against France, and the junction of nine ships from Ferrol with the French squadron. They talk of a great navy getting ready at Cadiz, and of mighty preparations in the ports of France for an embarkation. As all this must have been foreseen, I suppose we are ready to resist all attacks.

The Parliament rose last Saturday, not without an open division in the Ministry: Lord Gower, President of the Council, heading an opposition to a bill for doubling the Militia, which had passed the Commons, and throwing it out; which Lord North as publicly resented. I make no comments on this, because I really know

nothing of the motives. Thoroughly convinced that all my ideas are superannuated, and too old to learn new lessons, I only hear what passes, pretend to understand nothing, and wait patiently for events as they present themselves. I listen enough to be able to acquaint you with facts of public notoriety; but attempt to explain none of them, if they do not carry legibility in the van.

Your nephew, who lives more in the world, and is coming to you, will be far more master of the details. He called here some few days ago, as I was going out to dinner, but has kindly promised to come and dine here before he sets out. His journey is infinitely commendable, as entirely undertaken to please you. It will be very comfortable too, as surely the concourse of English must much abate, especially as France is interdicted. Travelling boys and self-sufficient governors would be an incumbrance to you, could you see more of your countrymen of more satisfactory conversation. Florence probably is improved since it had a Court of its own, and there must be men a little more enlightened than the poor Italians. Scarcely any of the latter that ever I knew but, if they had parts, were buffoons. I believe the boasted *finesse* of the ruling clergy is pretty much a traditionary notion, like their jealousy. More nations than one live on former characters after they are totally changed.

I have been often and much in France. In the provinces they may still be gay and lively; but at Paris, bating the pert *étourderie* of very young men, I protest I scarcely ever saw anything like vivacity—the Duc de Choiseul alone had more than any hundred Frenchmen I could select. Their women are the first in the world in everything but beauty; sensible, agreeable, and infinitely informed. The *philosophes*, except Buffon, are solemn, arrogant, dictatorial coxcombs—I need not say superlatively disagreeable. The rest are amazingly ignorant in general, and void of all conversation but the routine with women. My dear and very old friend [Madame du Deffand] is a relic of a better age, and at nearly eighty-four has all the impetuosity that *was* the character of the French. They have not found out, I believe, how much their nation is sunk in Europe;—probably the Goths and Vandals of the North will open their eyes before a century is past. I speak of the swarming empires that have conglomerated within our memories. *We* dispelled the vision twenty years ago: but let us be modest till we do so again.

I just now receive two letters from you at once, which I suppose came by Mrs. Pitt's messenger, with Sir William Hamilton's assurances of the good disposition of the King of Spain: but they

have proved as vain as the letters to the Grand-Duchess; yet I still think we might have kept him in temper if we had so pleased.

9th.

The Duke of Ancaster is dead of a scarlet fever contracted by drinking and rioting, at two-and-twenty. He was in love with my niece Lady Horatia, the Duchess's third daughter, and intended to marry her. She is a beautiful girl, like her mother, though not of so sublime a style of beauty. I much doubt whether she would have been happy with him; for, though he had some excellent qualities, he was of a turbulent nature, and, though of a fine figure, his manners were not noble. Fortune seems to have removed him, to complete her magnificent bounties to one family. Do you remember old Peter Burrell, who was attached to my father? His eldest grand-daughter is married to a Mr. Bennet, a man of large estate; the second, to Lord Algernon Percy; the third, to Lord Percy; and the youngest, the only one at all pretty, to Duke Hamilton. Lady Priscilla Elizabeth Bertie, eldest sister of the Duke of Ancaster, fell in love with their brother, and would marry him, not at all at his desire; but her father, the Duke of Ancaster, had entailed his whole estate on his two daughters, after his son, to the total disinherison of his brother Lord Brownlowe, the present Duke;—and the grandson of Peter Burrell, a broken merchant, is husband of the Lady Great Chamberlain of England, with a barony and half the Ancaster estate. Old Madam Peter is living, to behold all this deluge of wealth and honours on her race. The Duchesses of Ancaster have not been less singular. The three last were never sober. The present Duchess Dowager was natural daughter of Panton, a disreputable horse-jockey of Newmarket; and the new Duchess was some lady's woman, or young lady's governess. Fortune was in her most jocular moods when she made all these matches, or had a mind to torment the Heralds' Office.

11th.

Last night I received from town the medal you promised me on the Moorish alliance.[1] It is at least as magnificent as the occasion required, and yet not well executed. The medallist Siriez, I conclude, is grandson of my old acquaintance Louis Siriez[2] of the Palazzo Vecchio.

Yesterday's Gazette issued a proclamation on the expected invasion

[1] Between the Great-Duke of Tuscany and the Emperor of Morocco.—WALPOLE.
[2] A French silversmith settled at Florence.—WALPOLE.

from Havre, where they are embarking mightily. Some think the attempt will be on Portsmouth. To sweeten this pill, Clinton has taken a fort and seventy men—not near Portsmouth, but New York; and there were reports at the latter that Charleston is likely to surrender. This would be something, if there were not a French war and a Spanish war in the way between us and Carolina. Sir Charles Hardy is at Torbay with the whole fleet, which perhaps was not part of the plan at Havre: we shall see, and you shall hear, if anything passes.

Friday night, July 16th.

Your nephew has sent me word that he will breakfast with me to-morrow, but shall not have time to dine. I have nothing to add to the foregoing general picture. We have been bidden even by proclamation to expect an invasion, and troops and provisions have for this week been said to be embarked. Still I do not much expect a serious descent. The French, I think, have better chances with less risk. They may ruin us in detail. The fleet is at present at home or very near, and very strong; nor do I think that the French plan is activity:—but it is idle to talk of the present moment, when it will be some time before you receive this. I am infinitely in more pain about Mr. Conway, who is in the midst of the storm in a nutshell, and I know will defend himself as if he was in the strongest fortification in Flanders—and, which is as bad, I believe the Court would sacrifice the island to sacrifice him. They played that infamous game last year on Keppel, when ten thousand times more was at stake. They look at the biggest objects through the diminishing end of every telescope; and, the higher they who look, the more malignant and mean the eye.

I send you 'The Mysterious Mother,' and a pair of bootikins; you shall have large supplies if they prove of service—yet I would not have you even try them, unless attacked in your head or stomach. You can never have much gout in your limbs, as it attacks you so late, and little fits will prolong your life. You must put them on at night and tie them as tight as you can bear, the flannel next to your flesh, the oilskin over. In the morning before you rise, you must dry your feet with a hot napkin, and put on a pair of warm stockings freshly aired; over the bootikins at night, a pair of thread stockings.

The Duchess Dowager of Ancaster, Lady Elizabeth Burrell, and the new Duke and Duchess, have all written to Lady Horatia, acknowledging that the late Duke was to have married her. The two first have expressed themselves in the tenderest manner; the

others wrote only for form. The Mother-Duchess approves of my niece going into mourning, which she does for six months. The poor young man, his father's absurd Will not standing good, made a new and most rational one four years ago, in which he gives the seat of the family and 5000*l.* to the present Duke and to the title, and adds 1800*l.* a year to his mother's jointure. Such symptoms of sense and feeling double the loss.

Adieu! my dear Sir. In what manner we are to be undone, I do not guess; but I see no way by which we can escape happily out of this crisis—I mean, preserve the country and recover the Constitution. I thought for four years that calamity would bring us to our senses: but alas! we have none left to be brought to. We shall now suffer a great deal, submit at last to a humiliating peace, and people will be content.—So adieu, England! it will be more or less a province or kind of province to France, and its viceroy will be, in what does not concern France, its despot—and will be content too! I shall not pity the country: I shall feel only for those who grieve with me at its abject state; or for posterity, if they do not, like other degraded nations, grow callously reconciled to their ignominy.

1827. TO THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY.

Saturday night, July 10, 1779.

I could not thank your Ladyship before the post went out to-day, as I was getting into my chaise to go and dine at Carshalton with my cousin Thomas Walpole when I received your kind inquiry about my eye. It is quite well again, and I hope the next attack of the gout will be anywhere rather than in that quarter.

I did not expect Mr. Conway would think of returning just now. As you have lost both Mrs. Damer and Lady William Campbell, I do not see why your Ladyship should not go to Goodwood.

The Baroness's increasing peevishness does not surprise me. When people will not weed their own minds, they are apt to be overrun with nettles. She knows nothing of politics, and no wonder talks nonsense about them. It is silly to wish three nations had but one neck; but it is ten times more absurd to act as if it was so, which the Government has done;—ay, and forgetting too, that it has not a scimitar large enough to sever that neck, which they have in effect made *one*. It is past the time, Madam, of making conjec-

tures. How can one guess whither France and Spain will direct a blow that is in their option? I am rather inclined to think that they will have patience to ruin us in detail. Hitherto France and America have carried their points by that manœuvre. Should there be an engagement at sea, and the French and Spanish fleets, by their great superiority, have the advantage, one knows not what might happen. Yet, though there are such large preparations making on the French coast, I do not much expect a serious invasion, as they are sure they can do us more damage by a variety of other attacks, where we can make little resistance. Gibraltar and Jamaica can but be the immediate objects of Spain. Ireland is much worse guarded than this island:—nay, we must be undone by our expense, should the summer pass without any attempt. My cousin thinks they will try to destroy Portsmouth and Plymouth—but I have seen nothing in the present French Ministry that looks like bold enterprise. We are much more adventurous, that set everything to the hazard; but there are such numbers of *baronesses* that both talk and act with passion, that one would think the nation had lost its senses.

Everything has miscarried that has been undertaken, and the worse we succeed, the more is risked;—yet the nation is not angry! How can one conjecture during such a delirium? I sometimes almost think I must be in the wrong to be of so contrary an opinion to most men—yet, when every misfortune that has happened had been foretold by a few, why should I not think I have been in the right? Has not almost every single event that has been announced as prosperous proved a gross falsehood, and often a silly one? Are we not at this moment assured that Washington cannot possibly amass an army of above 8000 men! and yet Clinton, with 20,000 men, and with the hearts, as we are told, too, of three parts of the colonies, dares not show his teeth without the walls of New York? Can I be in the wrong in not believing what is so contradictory to my senses? We could not conquer America when it stood alone; then France supported it, and we did not mend the matter. To make it still easier, we have driven Spain into the alliance. Is this wisdom? Would it be presumption, even if one were single, to think that we must have the worst in such a contest? Shall I be like the mob, and expect to conquer France and Spain, and then thunder upon America? Nay, but the higher mob do not expect such success. They would not be so angry at the house of Bourbon, if not morally certain that those kings destroy all our

passionate desire and expectation of conquering America. We bullied, and threatened, and begged, and nothing would do. Yet independence was still the word. Now we rail at the two monarchs —and when they have banged us, we shall sue to them as humbly as we did to the Congress. All this my senses, such as they are, tell me has been and will be the case. What is worse, all Europe is of the same opinion; and though forty thousand *baronesses* may be ever so angry, I venture to prophesy that we shall make but a very foolish figure whenever we are so lucky as to obtain a peace; and posterity, that may have prejudices of its own, will still take the liberty to pronounce, that its ancestors were a woful set of politicians from the year 1774 to — I wish I knew when.

If I might advise, I would recommend Mr. Burrell to command the fleet in the room of Sir Charles Hardy. The fortune of the Burrells is powerful enough to baffle calculation. Good night, Madam!

P.S. I have not written to Mr. Conway since this day sevennight, not having a teaspoonful of news to send him. I will beg your Ladyship to tell him so.

1828. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, July 12, 1779.

I AM concerned, dear Sir, that you gave yourself the trouble of transcribing the catalogue and prices, which I received last night, and for which I am exceedingly obliged to you. Partial as I am to the pictures at Houghton, I confess I think them much overvalued. My father's whole collection, of which alone he had preserved the prices, cost but 40,000*l.*; and after his death there were three sales of pictures, among which were all the whole-lengths of Vandyke but three, which had been sent to Houghton, but not fitting any of the spaces left, came back to town. Few of the rest sold were very fine, but no doubt Sir Robert had paid as dear for many of them; as purchasers are not perfect connoisseurs at first.[1]

[1] Compare p. 175 of this volume. The Houghton Collection was sold to the Empress of Russia in the year 1779 for the sum of 40,555*l.* The pictures were valued separately by Messrs. West and Cipriani. Most of the family portraits were reserved. Horace Walpole told Mr. Bull that the whole cost his father something short of 40,000*l.* including the pictures at the Treasury; it should be recollected, however, that several were presented to him.—CUNNINGHAM.

Many of the valuations are not only exorbitant, but injudicious. They who made the estimate seem to have considered the rarity of the hands more than the excellence. Three—The 'Magi's Offering,' by Carlo Maratti, as it is called, and two, supposed Paul Veronese, —are very indifferent copies, and yet all are roundly valued, and the first ridiculously. I do not doubt of another picture in the collection but the 'Last Supper,' by Raphael, and yet this is set down at 500*l.* I miss three pictures (at least they are not set down), the Sir Thomas Wharton, and Laud and Gibbons. The first is most capital; yes, I recollect I have had some doubts on the Laud, though the University of Oxford once offered 400*l.* for it—and if Queen Henrietta is by Vandyke, it is a very indifferent one. The affixing a higher value to the Pietro Cortona than to the octagon Guido is most absurd—I have often gazed on the latter, and preferred it even to 'The Doctors.' In short, the appraisers were determined to see what the Czarina *could* give, rather than what the pictures were really worth—I am glad she seems to think so, for I hear no more of the sale—it is not very wise in me still to concern myself, at my age, about what I have so little interest in—it is still less wise to be anxious on trifles, when one's country is sinking. I do not know which is most mad, my nephew or our Ministers; both the one and the other increase my veneration for the founder of Houghton!

I will not rob you of the prints you mention, dear Sir; one of them at least I know Mr. Pennant gave me. I do not admire him for his punctiliousness with you. Pray tell me the name of your glass-painter; I do not think I shall want him, but it is not impossible. Mr. Essex agreed with me, that Jarvis's windows for Oxford, after Sir Joshua Reynolds, will not succeed. Most of his colours are opaque, and their great beauty depending on a spot of light for sun or moon, is an imposition. When his paintings are exhibited at Charing-cross, all the rest of the room is darkened to relieve them. That cannot be done at New College; or if done, the chapel would be too dark. If there are other lights, the effect will be lost.

This sultry weather will, I hope, quite restore you; people need not go to Lisbon and Naples, if we continue to have such summers.

1829. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, July 14, 1779.

To show your Ladyship that I do not always wait for provocatives, I begin a letter to-night, without well knowing what it is to contain. I came to town this morning about my house in Berkeley Square, of which at last I begin to have hopes, though I am in Chancery for it; but it is by a mode of my own. I have persisted in complimenting and flattering my parties, till by dint of complaisance and respect I have brought them to pique themselves on equal attentions; so that instead of a law-suit it has more the air of a treaty between two little German princes who are mimicking their betters only to display their titular dignities. His Serene Highness, Colonel Bisshopp, is the most obsequious and devoted servant of my serenity the Landgrave of Strawberry.

His Royal Highness of Sion, who is Lord Paramount of Strawberry, has acquainted the College of Electors of Westminster that they are to be invaded by the French forthwith, and has subscribed 2000*l.* for the defence of his Palatinate. Governor Johnstone is said to be gone to destroy the embarkation: I hope he will do it as completely as he has demolished his own character. The town does not seem to be much alarmed, and the courageous Stocks don't value it a fraction; so it does not become us poor little princes to be more frightened than our superiors.

I met Miss Wrottesley this evening at my niece Cholmondeley's, and she told me Mr. Dunning has found a flaw in the settlements, and that they must be drawn again.

Are not you sorry, Madam, for the poor Duke of Ancaster, especially since he made so noble and sensible a Will? I think his attention to his mother must half kill her. I hear he has left a legacy to a very small man that was always his companion, and whom, when he was drunk, he used to fling at the heads of the company, as others fling a bottle. Lord Bolingbroke, I suppose, you know, is not dead.

Lady Jane Scott, to whom I made your Ladyship's compliments, has found in a cabinet at Ham a most enchanting picture in enamel by Zincke, of the Duchess of Queensberry, which the Duke always carried in his pocket. It is as simple as my Cowley, in white with

the hair all flowing, and beautiful as the Hours in Guido's 'Aurora,' and very like her to the last moment.

I dined on Saturday with my cousin, T. Walpole, at Carshalton, where, though so near London, I never was in my life. It is as rural a village as if in Northumberland, much watered with the clearest streams and buried in ancient trees of Scawen's Park,[1] and the neighbouring Beddington.

I had long wished to see the latter, the seat of one of my ancestors, Sir Nicholas Carew, whose head, as he was Master of the Horse and Knight of the Garter, flew off [1539] in one of the moods of Henry VIII. Madam Bess, I think, often visited his son there. It is an ugly place, with no prospect, a large very bad house, but it was burnt, rebuilt wretchedly after the Restoration,[2] and never finished. Nothing remains of the ancient fabric, but a brave old hall, with a pendent roof, copied by Wolsey at Hampton Court, a vast shield of arms and quarterings over the chimney, and two clumsy brazen andirons, which they told us had served Queen Elizabeth in the Tower, but look more as if they had served her for cannon to defend it. There is an almost effaced picture of Sir Nicholas, that seems to have been painted by Holbein, and for which, perished as it is, I longed.[3]

I shall terminate this letter of scraps and nothings with a good epigram, which Mr. Jerningham gave me t'other day :—

Ce Marmontel si lent, si long, si lourd,
  Qui ne parle pas, mais qui beugle,
  Juge la peinture en aveugle,
Et la musique comme un sourd.
Ce pedant a si sotte mine,
  Et de ridicules bardé,
Dit qu'il a le secret des beaux vers de Racine—
  Jamais secret ne fut si bien gardé.

The first line put me in mind of an excellent satiric epitaph on the General Lord Cadogan, of which I have forgotten all but the last couplet,—

Ungrateful to th' ungrateful man he grew by,
A bad, bold, blustering, bloody, blundering booby.

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[1] So called after Sir William Scawen (d. 1722), three times M.P. for Surrey. There is a monument to his memory in Carshalton Church by Rysbrach.—Cunningham.

[2] After 1709.—Cunningham.

[3] He afterwards obtained a copy of it, from which, in 1792, Lysons had the engraving made for his account of Beddington in the 'Environs of London.'—Cunningham.

They were Bishop Atterbury's, who was glad to kill the Duke of Marlborough with the same stone.

1830. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 20, 1779.

It would have been impossible for me, Madam, to have met your Ladyship in town yesterday, had it been proper; but when you were there but for one day, and that a nuptial one, I should have been unreasonable to expect you to bestow a twinkling on me. In fact, I was detained here; poor Lady Aylesbury was come to me all terror and distress.

Her daughter was really taken prisoner, and she had been told her husband and his island were captive too. The Duchess of Leinster, Lady William Campbell, and Mrs. Damer were actually taken by a privateer, the captain of which was no doubt a Paladin in disguise; he not only treated them with the continence of Scipio, but with disinterest, a virtue still more rare in a freebooter. He would not touch a pin; and they were told they were mistresses to go whither they pleased. Mr. Conway has been as little molested. *Acharnement* is left only to us. A courtier said yesterday, "We must act offensively;" I replied, "I thought we had done that sufficiently already, for we had offended all the world." There were letters in the City on Saturday that say Gibraltar is besieged. I have heard no more of it since; but it is very probable.

It is true that my niece Horatia has put on mourning for the Duke of Ancaster: it is on precedents, and with the approbation of the Duchess Dowager, who has written to her in the kindest manner, acknowledging the intended marriage; lamenting not having her for a daughter, and offering to come to her as soon as she is able. Lady E. Burrell has written in the same style; and the new Duke and Duchess have sent compliments of condolence. Lady Horatia has behaved in the most reasonable manner, shown very proper concern, but nothing romantic or extravagant.

Your Ladyship exacts a *petit mot* on Canopus, but I have not a word to say. I have lived till all the maxims and axioms that I learnt in my youth are grown as superannuated as I am. The sages I was taught to worship have been exploded, and the experience of past ages contradicted. Ministers become more popular in proportion to their miscarriages; debts, taxes, losses, strengthen Govern-

ment. Saws and proverbs, formerly esteemed the quintessence of wisdom, are inverted; for instance, rats of old abandoned a sinking ship,—now they run into it. As we have chopped our old system to pieces and thrown it into the kettle to give it new life, be sure it will come out with fresh vigour and bloom; however, obstinate *I wait for the echo.* Let us see what is left, when we come to sue for, and do obtain peace. A map then, and a pen and ink, will decide who have been in the right.

I hope, and do not doubt, Madam, but your new Countess will be very happy. Lord Shelburne made an admirable husband to a wife, much less handsome, and apparently, for I did not know her, less agreeable. He I am sure will be out of luck if he is unfortunate, for I must do the Duchess of Bedford the justice to say, that a Spartan dame never launched more excellent wives than she has done.

This was only meant as an answer, and I will not swell it into more. I see one is to be kept upon the *qui vive* all the summer with reports and alarms true or false; but I have prepared myself by disbelieving every one till it has been contradicted backwards and forwards two or three times.

We have not arrived at a word of truth these four years, till by a new lie becoming necessary its predecessor is forgotten and suffered to appear stark naked.

1831. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1779.

You will be tired of seeing my hand, Madam, yet it would be indecent neither to accept your kind invitation nor tell you why I do not. Yesterday I received notice from my attorney that the Master of the Rolls has, with epigrammatic despatch, heard my cause, and pronounced a decree in my favour. Surely the whip of the new driver, Lord Thurlow, has pervaded all the broad wheels of the law, and set them galloping. I must go to town on Monday, and get my money ready for payment,—not from impatience to enter on my premises, but though the French declare they are coming to burn London, bank-bills are still more combustible than houses, and should my banker's shop be reduced to ashes, I might have a mansion to pay for, and nothing to pay with. If both were consumed, at least I should not be in debt.

I will own fairly, too, that the moment is so huge, I do not care to stir. It is pretty certain that France, vociferous as her threats, and ready as her preparations, will await the decision of the empire of the sea. We have, I doubt, one prong less to our trident than she and Spain; yet I think the grapple will be tough. Were I Neptune or Æolus, or—I forget who was the classic God of sea-fights, or whether they ever deified any Twitcher after his reception into Olympus,—I should perhaps make a pretty impartial division of the damage, and lay it so heavy on both sides, that Madam the House of Bourbon should be glad to leave off playing with fire, and Madam Great Britain should learn to treat mediators with more civility. Every man John of the latter lady's boys are confident of success, and when other arguments fail, cry, Providence has always saved us; which argument, I suppose, is built on this simple hypothesis, that God made Great Britain, and the Devil all the rest of the world. To be sure I heartily pray for victory; but I would not have it quite so sound as to turn our heads and encourage us to pawn our last fig-leaf. Obstinacy has brought us to the precipice; and after squandering America, we stake ourselves rather than own we have lost it; but I forget,—what is all this to my going next week or not to Ampthill? Why, this all, our all, is the reason I do not go. Public, private considerations fetter me. I am no hero, nor any of the fine things your Ladyship says of me, and yet I must stay and comfort those that are weaker than myself. Lady Aylesbury is impressed with a thousand terrors, and not without cause. I tremble myself lest Mr. Conway should have an opportunity of being romantic and defending a pebble,[1] because he has nothing else to defend; but *dabit Deus his quoque finem.* I have lived to see the rebels at Derby; and I am mighty apt to think that everything will end as I wish. I know no reason why I should be favoured with Fortune's smiles; but she takes fancies; and in gratitude and deference I have thrown myself entirely upon her. But two days ago, she delivered me from a deluge. There was a torrent of rain; all the pipes were stopped, and the inundation burst into six places of my house. The Gallery was overflowed, pictures and damask soaked, the Star-Chamber drowned, and the staircase was a cataract. I sent up all the servants, and in a quarter of an hour the waters ceased, and I dreamt that a rainbow rested on the battlements, and

[1] Jersey—then menaced by the French, of which Conway was governor.—CUNNINGHAM.

assured my castle should never be drowned again. Pray, Madam, learn my visions; they are very comfortable, and founded on gratitude, not presumption.

I have heard much of Mr. B.'s being a second Cosmo Gordon and a third Parson Bate. It is a worthy occupation for a man and a gentleman! but too contemptible to dwell on.

A card shall be left for Mr. Beresford, in Grosvenor Place, on Monday. My gout entered like love, but I assure you did not retreat like love, or at sixty-two I doubt the fit would have been longer.

1832. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1779.

I EMPLOY a secretary, to spare one of my eyes, which is tormented with an inflammation. As it comes by fits, I impute it to my old enemy the gout; who, of all distempers, is the greatest harlequin. This charge is not made to avoid an unwillingness of owning that the breach may have been made by the general foe, old age; though its ally, the gout, may take advantage of the weak place.

I sent you a long letter by your nephew: it leaves me nothing to add but events, and of them there have been none, except the safe arrival of our great West Indian fleet, worth between two and three millions. I don't know why the fleets of Bourbon suffered it to pass quietly, unless to return the compliment of our not meddling with their Domingo fleet. We heard last week that Gibraltar was invested: not more is confirmed than that great preparations are making in Spain for the siege. We, or at least I, do not know what numbers of the latter's ships have joined the French: they certainly out-number Sir Charles Hardy's squadron; yet so noble a navy as his we never set forth, and it will cost them destruction to master it. They threaten us mightily from Havre and St. Maloes; but we are prepared, and I think they will prefer cheaper laurels elsewhere.

This is but a negative description, and merely in compliance with your desire of frequent letters. Private news we have none, but what I have long been bidden to expect, the completion of the sale of the pictures at Houghton to the Czarina. The sum stipulated is forty or forty-five thousand pounds, I neither know nor care which; nor whether the picture-merchant ever receives the whole sum, which probably he will not do, as I hear it is to be discharged at

three payments—a miserable bargain for a mighty empress! Fresh lovers, and fresh, will perhaps intercept the second and third payments. Well! adieu to Houghton! about its mad master I shall never trouble myself more. From the moment he came into possession, he has undermined every act of my father that was within his reach, but, having none of that great man's sense or virtues, he could only lay wild hands on lands and houses; and, since he has stript Houghton of its glory, I do not care a straw what he does with the stone or the acres. The happiness my father entailed on this country has been thrown away in as distracted a manner, but his fame will not be injured by the insanity of any of his successors. We have paid a fine for having cut off the entail, but shall not so easily suffer a recovery.

General Conway is still in his little island, which I trust is too diminutive to be descried by an Armada. I do not desire to have him achieve an Iliad in a nut-shell.

57.

You perceive my eye is better, but I must not use it much. Yesterday came an account of the conquest of St. Vincent by the French. The poor Caribs assisted them, and are revenged on us: I cannot blame them. How impolitic is injustice, when man cannot command fortune! I still cannot help conjecturing that France will prefer demolishing all our outworks to attempting invasion here, where we are so mightily prepared. We fear they will not engage Sir Charles Hardy, though superior in number; as he has at least thirty-eight such ships, and such able and tried captains in them, as they cannot match. By thus detaining all our force at home, distant quarters are half at their mercy. They themselves think America much disposed to return to us, and therefore will probably not hazard a defeat here, which would leave us time to treat with the Colonies. But I must not let my eye talk of politics. Good night!

1833. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Aug. 7, 1779.

I HAVE had a double excuse for not having written to your Ladyship for above a week; a return of the gout in my eye, and the completion of the purchase of my house, for which I have been no fewer than three times in town since last Sunday. Fortune has

again smiled on me: I think myself most lucky to have paid my money; the house might be burnt, I obliged to buy it, and have nothing to pay for it—at least I shall not be in debt for the ashes. Well! Fortune has smiled on more than an individual, by conducting home our West Indian fleet. Huffed, rebuffed, and driven off as she has been, she is likely to be our best ally. The rest, as ill-treated, are not so forgiving. Whether the French will come, is another matter: they certainly meditate it, and great destruction; they give out, to burn London. Lord North said publicly, at a large dinner at Lord Hertford's on Tuesday last, that he expected them in a week. Not having the Duchess of Bedford's shrewdness, I cannot discover cleverness in such a notification, unless he had bragged, too, that he had invited them. Still my mind does not *misgive* me, which is a comfortable resource, when one has not much grounds in reason. I take what precautions I can in my own affairs, and then resign myself to good fortune.

Your Ladyship will see Lord Grantham, and probably Lord Macartney. Our friends are returned on our hands from all quarters: would to God I were as sure of seeing Mr. Conway in safety! I do not desire to have him achieve an Iliad in a nut-shell. This I dare say to you, Madam, though not to him. Do not wonder then, that forty or twenty miles nearer to news are important to me. If Sir Charles Hardy's navy does not beat one a third more numerous, and with little loss too, Jersey will be swallowed on the road to England. All that will remain to the few will be to cry, You cannot say we did it, though they do say so. This may sound small consolation; but weigh it against what we should feel if we had an empire lost, and all the lives and all the disgraces on our consciences, and then, Madam, is inculpability no *douceur?* Well! we must shut our eyes on all this at present, and defend our last stake, and not scold like the perverse Jews when the Temple totters. I could be amazed at many things, if I had leisure—as why, after stooping to beg pardon of the Congress, we rejected the mediation of Spain; why, after beseeching France not to dabble in America, we do not treat now, and save what we can, as any peace signed to-day would be preferable to what we shall possibly sign two months hence. But we have stridden from blunder to blunder, and, as at chess, when the game is deplorable, the king and the castle change places; the one is reduced to a corner, and the other, who is called rook, too, may not bring him back without being checkmated.

1834. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 9, 1779.

I KNOW how to wish you joy on the conclusion of a suit in Chancery, for I have just carried one there, and may say with truth what never could be applied before to law, *veni, vidi, vici.* My cause was commenced, heard, and decided in two months. My palace in Berkeley Square is adjudged to me with costs, and the title bettered by that ordeal; and so I am rejoicing, as the Ministers on the arrival yesterday of the Jamaica fleet, when neither I nor they know whether in two months any property may be worth sixpence. Nobody at your distance can conceive how much is at stake from total and general incapacity. Two dotards are at the head of the only fleet and only army that are to decide our fate; and Lord North with that *bon-hommie,* for which a child is whipped when it shouts on setting its own frock on fire, cries, he expected the French every day. I remember a story of General Nieberg, governor of the last emperor, and who lost the first battle against the King of Prussia. He wrote to the Queen of Hungary these words; "*Je suis faché de dire à sa Majesté que son armée est battue, et tout par la faute de son serviteur Nieberg.*" The Queen who had not contributed, repaired the misfortune.

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Aug. 1, 1779.

I RECEIVED your melancholy (a king's friend would call it a croaking) letter the day after my arrival here, after a long journey, in which I saw many places and liked a few.

I can tell you nothing, except that I am here a week longer, and then to York; where I hope to keep a regular correspondence with you, if a correspondence will be feasable: till the 8th, a letter will find me here, and on the 11th at York.

I am charmed with the notes,[2] which will answer my purpose and Posterity's exactly. I do not think I shall have occasion to add above one or two.

Adieu, my dear Sir! this is merely to tell you where I am and where I am going; indeed I can tell you nothing else, and I fear you must be the chief informer during our next suite of correspondence.

Pray give me joy of the conclusion of my Chancery suit, and believe me most faithfully yours,

W. MASON

[2] The notes to which Mason alludes are thus referred to by Walpole in his 'Short Notes of his own Life,' (vol. i. p. lxxvii.) "At the end of May [1779] wrote a Commentary and Notes to Mr. Mason's later poems." Are not these recoverable? They relate to the 'Heroic Epistle,' 'The Postscript,' &c.—CUNNINGHAM.

In one word, I assure you I hope, though I do not believe, that the invasion will be in Ireland—not England. I wish this because it would be vain to wish that Scotland were south of both. I have no ill will to poor Ireland, but Ucalegon is at least one door farther off than one's own. I saw a letter but two days ago from Dublin which says, there is not a shilling to pay the small army there. They are hiding their plate and flocking to the capital, where there is no army to protect them. London will be in the same case; is to be left to old vain Northumberland and his constables, when the Emperor of America takes the field with all his guards. Lord Amherst in the mean time has begun works at Chatham, that cannot be finished in ten years, and then will be commanded by all the hills around. I could tell you forty parallel anecdotes, which if they do not terminate in total destruction, will never be believed, though every step of the last five years have marched towards them. Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, fold their arms and cry, "We have insulted them all so much, that they must sit still till we are humbled." *That will happen:* we shall take a panic at once, and sign anything; or on the first unexpected and indecisive success flounder on in obstinacy. This reduces one barely to wish for favourable events, with the reversion of chance; for one knows not what to wish coolly. Fortune can scarce dovetail good and bad circumstances so as to repair and strengthen the country and constitution; which if not restored together, the former will at best but languish and never revive. But it is in vain to skim one's thoughts: they boil over, and it is as well to finish now as write on. I will talk as if I did not see further than, I was going to say, most of those who have conducted us to the precipice, but some of them, believe me, are soundly alarmed. They do see at last that a bribe in hand was not worth two estates in the bush.

Well! *parlons comme si de rien n'étoit.* I was lately at Beddington, and saw there a print I never met with before. It is a mezzotint of a Sir Nicholas Carew, who lived temp. Geo. I., and never did any thing but sit for that print; yet you know how inestimable an unique print —which however is not unique—is to a collector. There are at least five more in the house, and perhaps the plate, or I should not be so audacious as to beg one. In short, I should be greatly obliged to Mr. Fountaine [the Dean of York] if he would give me one. An attorney lives in the mansion, who might be ordered to deliver one to Mr. Thomas Walpole, who lives at Carshalton, not two miles from Beddington. They are all framed and glazed. I do not want

their accompaniments nor the print much, if pasted on cloth, though I would deign to accept one so, if no other is to be obtained.

Adieu! I have survived many dark moments, and think I do not know by what luck that you and I shall still meet again and pass some agreeable hours. When one reasons, one has few hopes; but a superstitious confidence always carries me to incline to expect that things will end to please me; and as I have found that my star knows much better than I do what is best for me, I commend myself to it, and beg it will mend the scene, as it did after the conquest of New York.

1835. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 12, 1779.

I WRITE from decency, dear Sir, not from having any thing particular to say, but to thank you for your offer of letting me see the arms of painted glass; which, however, I will decline, lest it should be broken, and as at present I have no occasion to employ the painter. If I build my offices, perhaps I may have; but I have dropped that thought for this year. The disastrous times do not inspire expense. Our alarms, I conclude, do not ruffle your hermitage. We are returning to our state of islandhood, and shall have little, I believe, to boast but of what we have been.

I see a 'History of Alien Priories' announced;[1] do you know any thing of it, or of the author?

1836. TO THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY.

Strawberry Hill, Friday night, 1779.

I AM not at all surprised, my dear Madam, at the intrepidity of Mrs. Damer;[2] she always was the heroic daughter of a hero. Her sense and coolness never forsake her. I, who am not so firm, shuddered at your Ladyship's account. Now that she has stood fire for four hours, I hope she will give as clear proofs of her under-

[1] This was Mr. Gough's well-known work in two volumes octavo, entitled 'Some Account of the Alien Priories, and of such Lands as they are known to have possessed in England and Wales.'—WRIGHT.

[2] The packet in which she was crossing from Dover to Ostend was taken by a French frigate, after a running fight of several hours.—WALPOLE.

standing, of which I have as high opinion as of her courage, and not return in any danger.

I am to dine at Ditton[1] to-morrow, and will certainly talk on the subject you recommend; yet I am far, till I have heard more, from thinking with your Ladyship, that more troops and artillery at Jersey would be desirable. Any considerable quantity of either, especially of the former, cannot be spared at this moment, when so big a cloud hangs over this island, nor would any number avail if the French should be masters at sea. A large garrison would but tempt the French thither, were it but to distress this country; and, what is worse, would encourage Mr. Conway to make an impracticable defence. If he is to remain in a situation so unworthy of him, I confess I had rather he was totally incapable of making any defence. I love him enough not to murmur at his exposing himself where his country and his honour demand him; but I would not have him measure himself in a place untenable against very superior force. My present comfort is, as to him, that France at this moment has a far vaster object. I have good reason to believe the Government knows that a great army is ready to embark at St. Maloes, but will not stir till after a sea-fight, which we do not know but may be engaged at this moment. Our fleet is allowed to be the finest ever set forth by this country; but it is inferior in number by seventeen ships to the united squadron of the Bourbons. France, if successful, means to pour in a vast many thousands on us, and has threatened to burn the capital itself. Jersey, my dear Madam, does not enter into a calculation of such magnitude. The moment is singularly awful; yet the vaunts of enemies are rarely executed successfully and ably. Have we trampled America under our foot?

You have too good sense, Madam, to be imposed upon by my arguments, if they are insubstantial. You do know that I have had my terrors for Mr. Conway; but at present they are out of the question, from the insignificance of his island. Do not listen to rumours, nor believe a single one till it has been canvassed over and over. Fear, folly, fifty motives, will coin new reports every hour at such a conjuncture. When one is totally void of credit and power, patience is the only wisdom. I have seen dangers still more imminent. They were dispersed. Nothing happens in proportion to what

[1] Thames Ditton, where Lord Hertford had then a villa, afterwards known as Boyle Farm.—CUNNINGHAM.

is meditated. Fortune, whatever fortune is, is more constant than is the common notion. I do not give this as one of my solid arguments, but I have always encouraged myself in being superstitious on the favourable side. I never, like most superstitious people, believe auguries against my wishes. We have been fortunate in the escape of Mrs. Damer, and in the defeat at Jersey, even before Mr. Conway arrived; and thence I depend on the same future prosperity. From the authority of persons who do not reason on such airy hopes, I am seriously persuaded, that if the fleets engage, the enemy will not gain advantage without deep-felt loss, enough, probably, to dismay their invasion. Coolness may succeed, and then negotiation. Surely, if we can weather the summer, we shall, obstinate as we are against conviction, be compelled, by the want of money, to relinquish our ridiculous pretensions, now proved to be utterly impracticable; for, with an inferior navy at home, can we assert sovereignty over America? It is a contradiction in terms and in fact. It may be hard of digestion to relinquish it, but it is impossible to pursue it. Adieu, my dear Madam! I have not left room for a line more.

1837. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday night late, Aug. 18, 1779.

All is true that you will see in the papers of the 'Marlborough,' 'Isis,' and 'Southampton' being chased by the French and Spanish fleets of sixty or sixty-three sail, as the former were going to join Sir Charles Hardy. To-day came another express, that the united squadron was off Falmouth on Saturday. They are probably come to seek and fight our fleet, which, if not joined by those three ships, consists of but thirty-six—on whom depends our fate!

I could give you details of unreadiness at home that would shock you: miracles alone can counteract it, and them have we merited? If Hardy does not vanquish to deletion of the enemy, shall we be bettered? If he does, will fool-hardiness be corrected by success? Turn whither you will, whence is salvation to come to a nation so besotted? I will give you a sample of what the victors would reserve for those they deem their worst enemies, the friends of their country. The Bishop of Oxford [John Butler], once a writer in patriot opposition, wrote t'other day to his friend and patron, my brother, that Lord Harcourt had invited him to dinner, treated him

most benignantly, and not mentioned a word of politics; "surely," added the meek apostle, "if there were a toleration of patriots, Lord Harcourt would be entitled to the benefit of it"—that is, St. Dominic would not cut his host's throat, if the holy office ever pardoned, but it does not; and Lord Harcourt must die, though he has banqueted a bishop.

It is such wretches and their blundering politics, that, in nineteen years, have changed a glorious empire into a wide heap of ruins. Amidst these calamities and public woes, I am trembling for Mr. Conway, who is chained to a rock. I am anxious about the Duke of Richmond, who is exiled to Exeter, and may be exposed to the first descent with a handful of men, but

God and good angels fight on Richmond's side.

His virtues shine the brighter from the cloud of filth that is thrown on them, and a nation cannot be destroyed without its being remembered who would have saved it. History may flatter contemporaries, but as the dead have no places, no pensions to bestow, truth revives the moment its enemies are in the grave, and then the bones of the *ultimi Anglorum* will be selected and enshrined by poor weeping posterity. You see I am seeking consolation among the reliques of my few friends; cold comfort, a vision of honorary tribute to be paid to the ashes of heroes in a little northern island, that has no pride to live on but the memory of virtuous patriots! Those of happier days will be remembered too! and my father's favourite sentence of *quieta non movere* will appear to have been replete with as much wisdom as Lord Mansfield's schoolboy quotation of the Rubicon being passed. Adieu![1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, August* 21, 1779.

I HAVE procured you a 'Sir Nicholas Carew' of the Dean of York, as good an impression, I believe, as the plate was capable of giving, and ready for a portfeuille, having no canvass to incommode you at your next print shearing. I will send it rolled on a stick, by the first person I hear of going to town.

By the papers of the two last posts I am led to expect something has been already done which will decide whether poor England is mistress of the seas or no. I wait a line from you with impatience, for I know you don't stand upon the punctilio of letter for letter, which to me, who have no news to pay with, would be worse than the posting-tax. I hope, however, this ensuing race week, and Lord John Cavendish's company whom I expect to-day, may make my next more worth postage; in the mean time, thanking you for all your favours, I rest, or rather sleep,

Sincerely yours,

W. MASON.

1838. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 19, 1779.

THE French and Spanish squadrons, of sixty sail, passed by Sir Charles Hardy without meeting; and, on the 14th, chased three of our men-of-war, that were going to join him, into Plymouth. To-day an account is come, that the enemy's fleet, of fifty-six sail, is *anchored* before that fleet. Whether hoping to burn it, or to wait for their transports, I do not pretend to say, as there are different opinions. Hardy will undoubtedly attack them as soon as he can; but the easterly wind keeps him out at sea.

I would write to you, to mark my constant attention; but it is difficult for one so totally uninformed as I am to speak on such great events when pending, and as improper when the sea swarms with privateers, and my letter must pass through so many post-offices. You know me well enough to guess at my sentiments. You know me an unalterable Englishman, who loves his country and devoutly wishes its prosperity. Such I am, ardent for England, and ever shall be; it is all an useless old man can do, to pray for its lasting prosperity. The events of war must be accepted with constancy, good or bad. You, a minister of peace and at a distance, will be anxious for every post. Good news you shall have instantly: I hope I shall have nothing sinister to send you. I may not be at hand immediately to tell you everything: I have female relations whose husbands may be in action, whose spirits I must keep up, and who are in different counties; but I shall never be long from home. Every man must do the utmost he can in his sphere when his country is concerned, and private duties must be attended to too. I have lived long enough to possess calmness enough for my use. It has long been my maxim, that most things are excusable in the passions of youth; but that an old man is bound to think of nothing but what is right, and to be serviceable to others. Virtues, if one has any, shine brightest when put to the trial; but ostentation may taint even them. My father is ever before my eyes—not to attempt to imitate him, for I have none of his matchless wisdom, or unsullied virtues, or heroic firmness; but sixty-two years have taught me to gaze on him with ten thousand times the reverence that, I speak it with deep shame, I felt for him at twenty-two, when he stood before me! I must check this theme—it would carry me too far; and it is at midnight I am writing, and my letter must go to London at eight

in the morning. Adieu! my dear Sir: may I send you victories while we are at war; but, being no military man, I may be allowed to wish I could send you peace!

1839. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Aug. 23, at night.

You may think what you please, but I am grieved to say that even more than the empire of the seas is at stake! At present the combined fleets are gone or blown from Plymouth, and the bells at Richmond rang last night as if they were gone to the bottom. The only conclusion to be drawn at this moment is, that they will fight Sir Charles Hardy before their embarkation takes place. By what I see, much is to be apprehended from so little being apprehended; you would scarce believe half I could tell you.[1] I did indeed this morning, as I came to town, meet thirty-six carriages with ammunition going to the west, not post, and yesterday they worked all day at the Tower, though Sunday. Is it pleasant to know that the fate of one's country may be decided in few weeks? My opinion is, that the enemies will strike in every place they can. They threaten Minorca, and the French minister at Florence sent an order to the great Duke by his valet de chambre not to admit English vessels into Leghorn, and it is supposed a like message has been delivered at Naples, though perhaps in a more decent manner.

You will see in the papers Lord Sandwich's incredulity of Sir Jacob Wheate's account of the combined fleets. When he gave the same relation to Neptune himself, and happened to say, they were superior to ours, the quick answer was, "Oh, yes, I suppose they have four or five ships more."

I have not time nor disposition to write more; even now I have written affectedly, for I have suppressed the various kinds of indignation I feel, and I cannot write long to you unnaturally, yet it is below a man to rail, when England totters to its foundations. Disgraced it is for ever! In what piteous condition it may emerge I know not—if it does emerge; if it does not, happy they who do not live to see its utter destruction.

Yours to the last,

H. WALPOLE.

[1] There is some obscurity here which I cannot clear up.—CUNNINGHAM.

1840. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 5, 1779.

If I tell you nothing but truth, my letter will be wondrously short. Since my last, there have been no events but what, in modern phrase, are called *movements*. The combined fleets appeared before Plymouth, and disappeared. Sir Charles Hardy was driven westward. The 'Ardent,' mistaking enemies for friends, fell among them; but Captain Boteler was thrown so little off his guard, that it took four ships to master him, and his own sunk as soon as he and his men were received on board the victors'. Monsieur D'Orvilliers, admiring his gallantry, applauded it. He modestly replied, "You will find every captain in our fleet behave in the same manner." *Un tel déportement donne à penser.* At last we heard of Sir Charles Hardy off Plymouth, and yesterday at Portsmouth. Where the combined are, I know not precisely; but, that such extended lines should not have caught the eye of each other, is very surprising to us inexpert in winds and tides. On those I never allow myself to conjecture or reason; and thus I have told you all the little I know, disrobed of the reports and lies of each new day. Opinions, were I informed enough to frame them, would be stale ere they could reach you. I write rather to extract the small truth there is in newspapers and interested relations, than to swell your imagination. My letter must pass through so many inquisitions, that it is necessary it should be able to stand the test.

There is not a word of private news. All the world are politicians, or soldiers; or, rather, both. I hope they will improve more in the latter profession than they have done in the former. Even this little quiet village is grown a camp. Servants are learning to fire all day long, and, I suppose, soon will demand their wages *le pistolet à la main.* I could draw other reflections; but a man who in a month will enter on his grand climacteric, and should busy himself with visions of what may happen when he is in his grave, would resemble Hogarth's debtor, who, in prison, is writing a scheme for paying the debts of the nation.

I forgot to tell you, that, the moment I received your letter to your nephew, I sent it to his house in town,—where he was not; and the servant believed he was to set out the next morning, but would send it to him. I have not been able to learn since whether he is gone or not; for your sake I own I wish he may be.

1841. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 5, 1779.

Your Ladyship and I seem to think alike, that when things are very bad, *il n'y a rien à dire.* For my part I have put most of my senses and intellects under an interdict. There is little use of them, when one can neither believe one's ears or eyes, nor can comprehend what is doing or not doing, nor can judge on anything like nineteen in twenty of those one meets. Now and then, indeed, I do meet with a person or two who is so candid as to say, "Well, I own I was mistaken." So civil a concession stops one's mouth, and prevents one's saying, "You lie; I know why you chose to mistake." Yes, Madam, I have been silent, for I did not know what to say, nor am a jot wiser now. Our fleet is at Portsmouth, nor do I form an opinion: I have seen how foul it is to pronounce on manœuvres at sea. Who this time twelvemonth conceived the merits of Admiral Keppel?

I scarce guess where you are, and direct this at random, to Ampthill. I have passed a miserable summer, and, like a joist of an old mansion, am mouldering with it. The gout has passed great part of its *villeggiatura* in my left eye, and now seems settled for autumn in my hip, but incog. under the name of rheumatism. I should be ashamed of complaining with such an exemplar of fortitude hard by, as my poor old friend, Lady Blandford. It will be three weeks on Tuesday since she was seized with a disorder in her bowels. At once, according to all her doctrine and all her practice, she determined to die, and would take nothing to assist nature, but told me when I expostulated with her, that the machine was worn out, and that life was of no value when uncomfortable. She has persisted perfectly cool and in her senses, begging for laudanum, suffering dreadfully, and the more, as you may imagine, from our late more than West Indian heats. She was alive this morning, for nature was determined to prove that she might have lived if she had pleased, though eighty-four. Consider, too, Madam, that it is not the fashion to wish to die, as it was with the Romans. Miss Stapylton, who is also a Virtue personified, has tended her from the moment she heard of her illness, and has literally scarce been in bed since. Miss Stapylton has 30,000*l.* and Lady Blandford nothing. I wish we had some of these exalted characters in breeches! These two women shine like the last sparkles in a piece of burnt paper, which

the children call the parson and clerk. Alas! the rest of our old ladies are otherwise employed; they are at the head of fleets and armies. Pray tell me something of yourself and concerns, Madam.

1842. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Sept. 5, 1779.

What can I write when I know nothing, and believe little that I hear? Winds and naval manœuvres I do not understand. Every body contradicts every body, and each new moment the last. Last week the enemies were between our coast and our fleet, and that was bad. Now our fleet is at Portsmouth, and the enemies nobody know where, and this is bad. Sum total—we are in a very bad condition, where nothing mends it. It is lucky for you that I cannot crowd my thoughts into a letter, nor can choose to which to give the preference. It is almost insupportable to see England fallen so low —fallen! It dashed itself down: no laws of gravitation could have thrown it so low in a century. It *would* strip itself of men, arms, wealth, fleets, to conquer what it possessed. It would force its friends to be its foes, that it might plunder them, and prevent their continuing to enrich it; and then when a neutral power, much more inclined to peace than war, would have extinguished the conflagration —bounce! you may be our enemy too if you please. There!

There is room for meditation even to madness! I am very far from well in body too. All the summer I have been tormented off and on with the gout in one of my eyes, which is now quite removed, but in the garb of rheumatism has fallen on my hip, and confines me to my house, so that I am a chaos of moral reflections. I am trying to extract an elixir of resignation, but as Cato and Brutus themselves allow one not to be perfectly philosophic, that is indifferent to the ruin of one's country, I am in a very Christian mood about personal sufferings, but cannot find a text in the New Testament that bids me not care what becomes of England when I am gone; unless silence gives consent. Adieu! Yours most cordially,

H. Walpole.

1843. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 11, 1779.

The British flag is indeed strangely lowered, Madam. I used to say the English flag; but since disgrace is our lot, I am very willing

that the Scotch, who have occasioned, should partake of it. The accounts from the West Indies are much more creditable, and the loss of the enemy much the more considerable—at least, the Gazette is to say so to-night. For my own part, I am not at all sorry of Sir Charles Hardy's inaction, not loving a *va-tout*.

You may imagine how much my feelings sympathise with your Ladyship's. Jersey rankles the most of all.

This is all I can write at present, having no use but of my right arm. The other is all gout, but I flatter myself it will not be a long fit, though my nights have been very painful. Your kind invitation to Ampthill, Madam, adds to my woes. I do not think I shall ever be able to go any whither on pleasure more. I never now have a week of perfect health together, nor have strength to recover in the intervals. There is nothing shocking in decay, when one has outlived the glory and prosperity of one's country.

1844. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 13, 1779.

I AM writing to you at random; not knowing whether or when this letter will go: but your brother told me last night that an officer, whose name I have forgot, was arrived from Jersey, and would return to you soon. I am sensible how very seldom I have written to you—but you have been few moments out of my thoughts. What *they* have been, you who know me so minutely may well guess, and why they do not pass my lips. Sense, experience, circumstances, can teach one to command one's self outwardly, but do not divest a most friendly heart of its feelings. I believe the state of my mind has contributed to bring on a very weak and decaying body my present disorders. I have not been well the whole summer; but for these three weeks much otherwise. It has at last ended in the gout, which to all appearance will be a short fit.

On public affairs I cannot speak. Everything is so exaggerated on all sides, that what grains of truth remain in the sieve would appear cold and insipid; and the great manœuvres you learn as soon as I. In the naval battle between Byron and D'Estaing, our captains were worthy of any age in our story.

You may imagine how happy I am at Mrs. Damer's return, and at her not being at Naples, as she was likely to have been, at the

dreadful explosion of Vesuvius.[1] Surely it will have glutted Sir William's rage for volcanos! How poor Lady Hamilton's nerves stood it I do not conceive. Oh, mankind! mankind! Are there not calamities enough in store for us, but must destruction be our amusement and pursuit?

I send this to Ditton, where it may wait some days; but I would not suffer a sure opportunity to slip without a line. You are more obliged to me for all I do not say, than for whatever eloquence itself could pen.

P.S. I unseal my letter to add, that undoubtedly you will come to the meeting of Parliament, which will be in October. Nothing can or ever did make me advise you to take a step unworthy of yourself. But surely you have higher and more sacred duties than the government of a mole-hill!

1845. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[2]

My Dear Lord: *Friday night.*

You have used me so much to your goodness, that I catch cold when I am long without feeling it. I have not had the honour of seeing you this age, and cannot yet *go* to see anything. My gout, I own, lasts long enough to wear out anybody's patience, and has reduced me to solitude; nor dare I complain, but to the very Good, for who else would mind me? But pray do not think that is my only reason for petitioning your Lordship:

> Blest be the gout, for those it took away,
> And those it left me[3]—if you are one of them!

However, do not be frightened; I trust that next week I shall be able to crawl about again; and then you will have as much reason to be alarmed with my gratitude; for I have already received obligations—ay! and presents enough, to be always

Your Lordship's
Most bounden servant,
Hor. Walpole.

[1] On the 10th of August; when the eruption was so great, that several villages were destroyed: a hunting seat belonging to the King of Naples, called Caccia Bella, shared the like fate.—Wright.

[2] Now first published.—Cunningham.

[3] Parody on Pope's lines about Gay.—Cunningham.

1846. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Excuse me, my dear Lord, from not writing with my own hand; but I am just got into bed with a little return of pain.

I hate to avoid any opportunity of being good-natured, but when your Lordship puts the question to me, I must speak truth. I do know Mr. Hammond, for I was at school with him. I know that he is a gentleman and has children, and that he had a very good estate at Teddington, which his extravagance obliged him to sell above twenty years ago. He has existed since by genteel begging of all his contemporaries and schoolfellows, whom he wore out, and he is now, I suppose, taking a new lease of the generosity of their grandchildren. In short, my dear Lord, I can say no good of him; and if your Lordship will be so noble as to send him a guinea or two, and tell him it is upon condition that he never troubles you any more, it will be beyond what he has any reason to expect.

I am grieved to hear your Lordship is out of order, and do hope you will not stir out till you are quite recovered. You will do more service to any part of your country that deserves it by taking care of yourself, than you could do even if you were a member of the Convocation, by sitting amongst them.

Your Lordship's
Most faithful humble servant,
H. W.

1847. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 14, 1779.

I received the print of Sir Nicholas [Carew] last night by the coach, and thank you kindly.

I have not written very lately for two reasons. When disgrace arrives from every quarter, from east, west, south, what is to be said? secondly, I have been very ill, and have now only the use of one hand. First I had a disorder in my bowels, then an inflammation on my hip which ended in the gout in my elbow, knee, and left hand. The two first went off so very quick, that I flattered myself the whole would; now I am hoping I shall be quit for one

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

hand which is tolerably bad indeed. In one word and without deluding myself, but for the moment, it is evident that my constitution is extremely impaired, and presents but a melancholy prospect for the rest of my life, which my increasing weakness will not probably allow to be long. Life, which I liked as well as most men, was indeed never less *amiable*. To linger on in illness were a pitiful wish to form, and to outlive the prosperity and glory of one's country were meaner still to wish. Wishing in fact decides nothing, and it is silly to say any thing about it; but when the cast of one's mind is forced on those reflections, one is a very disagreeable correspondent.

That *ignis fatuus* of a brighter period, Lord Temple, is dead. He was thrown out of a chaise on a heap of bricks, fractured his skull, was trepanned, and died.

My indisposition will prevent my visit to Nuneham this month, which I had promised. I shall take care how I promise, unless what I should not be sorry to be hindered from executing.

It is ridiculous in gouty sixty-two to make engagements, or undertake a journey, when at least one ought to put into one's chaise a crutch, an hour-glass, and a death's head. My heart to the last will hover about Nuneham, as one of the few spots it still dearly loves, for its own beauties and its excellent possessors. I can frame visions of how happy, how delighted I should have been, had they enjoyed it some years ago, when you, more Orpheus than Orpheus himself, would have made the groves dance after your lyre and pencil, and rendered it what we fancy Penshurst was, but was not, and would have found a Sacharissa congenial to her Waller. I should have been proud to have been Pursuivant to the house of Harcourt, and—but adieu visions! I must form no more, and what is the theatre on which any man could form them now! Oh, what a weight of lead is the ruin of one's country.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, September* 18, 1779.

I AM very sorry to find that your old enemy the gout has attacked you so early in the year: the winter was usually the time for his campaigns. I wish he may behave like the French, and run away from you after he has just threatened what he is able to do with you. Am not I a true prophet with respect to these said French? did not I say they would prove our superiors in folly, and have they not done so? but they have disgraced us, and robbed us of our naval honour; that is a matter we are too wise to regard.

As to myself, though tolerably well in health, I have not spirits enough in this dull place to do anything to the various unfinished things which I ought to finish, and

1848. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Sept. 16, 1779.

I HAVE received your letter by Colonel Floyd, and shall be surprised indeed if Cæsar does not find his own purple a little rumpled, as well as his brother's mantle. But how astonished was I at finding that you did not mention the dreadful eruption of Vesuvius. Surely you had not heard of it! What are kings and their popguns to that wrath of Nature! How Sesostris, at the head of an army of nations, would have fallen prostrate to earth before a column of blazing embers eleven thousand feet high! I am impatient to hear more, as you are of the little conflict of us pigmies. Three days after my last set out, we received accounts of D'Estaing's success against Byron and Barrington, and of the capture of Grenada. I do not love to send first reports, which are rarely authentic. The subsequent narrative of the engagement is more favourable. It allows the victory to the enemy, but makes their loss of men much the

therefore I have taken up your trade of book-making, and have interleaved our old church Anthem-book, in order to write little anecdotes about the composers out of the *opus magnum* of your friend Sir John Hawkins. Don't abuse me, you have taken painting anecdotes to yourself; pray let me deal in musical ones. Dr. Johnson, you know, has all poetical ones in fee simple; therefore I have nothing left me of the liberal arts but music, and that I will make the most of, and as Lord Orrery said that you could throw spirit into a Catalogue, I shall aim at as arduous a thing, and endeavour to throw spirit into an Anthem-book.

I forget whether I told you in my last that this ancient city is at present honoured with the company of Anti-Sejanus.[1] By pushing the *jus divinum* of tithes a little too far with his parishioners at Simonburne, they have made the place too hot to hold him, and therefore he has flung himself into York, in imitation of the Royal Martyr. Who knows but there may be a time when his patron, or even his patron's patron, may follow his example? However, let them come as soon as they please, I can tell them they must expect no favour from Anti-Sejanus. He will arm every coffee-house in the City against them, for he already abuses them like fury. This, however, I have only from hearsay, for I have the prudence to keep out of his way, lest I also should be abused, because I was once a Courtier and a King's chaplain.

I hope in your next to hear a better account of your health, which I am more earnest to hear than of a better account of my country, because the former is within the lines of possibility, and the other not. Adieu, my dear Sir, and believe me to be ever

Most truly yours,

W. MASON.

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[1] (See vol. iv. p. 491). The Rev. Mr. Scott, the Anti-Sejanus of pamphlets and the 'Public Advertiser.' He wrote in favour of Lord Sandwich, from whom he is said to have obtained at least one good living in the church. See 'Gray and Nicholl's Correspondence,' p. 135, and Walpole's 'Memoirs of George the Third,' vol. ii. p. 269. —CUNNINGHAM.

more considerable. Of ships we lost but one, taken after the fight as going into port to refit. Sir Charles Hardy and D'Orvilliers have not met; the latter is at Brest, the former at Portsmouth. I never penetrated an inch into what is to be; and into some distant parts of our history, I mean the Eastern, I have never liked to look. I believe it an infamous scene; you know I have always thought it so; and the Marattas are a nation of banditti very proper to scourge the heroes of Europe, who go so far to plunder and put themselves into their way. Nature gave to mankind a beautiful world, and larger than it could occupy,—for, as to the eruption of Goths and Vandals occasioned by excess of population, I very much doubt it; and mankind prefers deforming the ready Paradise, to improving and enjoying it. Ambition and mischief, which one should not think were natural appetites, seem almost as much so as the impulse to propagation; and those pious rogues, the clergy, preach against what Nature forces us to practise (or she could not carry on her system), and not twice in a century say a syllable against the Lust of Destruction! Oh! one is lost in moralising, as one is in astronomy! In the ordinance and preservation of the great universal system one sees the Divine Artificer, but our intellects are too bounded to comprehend anything more.

Lord Temple is dead by an accident. I never had any esteem for his abilities or character. He had grown up in the bask of Lord Chatham's glory, and had the folly to mistake half the rays for his own. The world was not such a dupe; and his last years discovered a selfish restlessness, and discovered to him, too, that no mortal regarded him but himself.

The Lucans are in my neighbourhood, and talk with much affection of you. Adieu!

849. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 24, at night.

I CAN learn no more of Lord Macartney, Madam, than your Ladyship sees in the papers, that he is near Rochelle. I have written to Madame du Deffand to beg she will do him any service in her power, though he must have more powerful mediators; but sometimes by accident a straw may be more useful than a white wand.

There was a Gazette this morning that will frighten the combined fleets out of their senses. We have destroyed a whole navy of

walnut-shells at a place as well known as Pharsalia, called Penobscot. If Great Britain was taken, and we reconquered an ait in the Thames, I believe the Gazette would think the latter only worth mentioning; but all we do and do not, is too silly and contemptible to dwell on!

Poor Lady Lincoln has a new misfortune, and has lost her son. Lord Thomas, the successor, is in America, and has more chances than one against returning.

I was in town yesterday for the first time of my going out these weeks, as my left hand is still muffled. I went to give some orders about my new house, with which I am much pleased, now it is painted and papered, though in the plainest manner possible. You are so good, Madam, as to mention the air of Southampton to me. I believe the sea air would do me good if anything would; but at present I am too low and too weak to determine on anything, or to bear anything but perfect quiet. You would not know me, for instead of being perpetually occupied about some trifle or other, I lie and doze half the day on the couch, and at night count the day gone with satisfaction.

It is very foolish or very vain, probably both, to fill half a letter with one's self at such a moment; but is the public a better theme? Where can one descry a prospect that promises a gleam of hope? Flying from D'Orvilliers, beaten by D'Estaing, and comforted by gathering a wreath of sea-weeds at Penobscot! How low is a nation sunk, when its understanding may be so insulted! Whenever the King of Prussia was beaten, he said he was beaten; he never sang *Te Deum* for putting to flight a handful of Hussars.

Adieu! Madam, I am sick of the times, and sick of myself, and so I doubt are you too.

1850. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1779.

Though I am vexed at your lying fallow, I know not how to reprove it. With what spirit could an African Homer have finished an Hannibaliad when *delenda esset Carthago?* Horace and Virgil could prank away, because they shared in the spoils of their country, yet you might imitate a worthier Roman, and instead of

turning your harp into a harpsichord,

you might, like Tully, write *de finibus bonorum et malorum,* if the

latter should meet their deserts; one would think it likely, when Anti-Sejanus begins to demolish the statues of Sejanus.

I am sorry Paul Jones has exchanged *the Friths* for the coasts of Yorkshire for both reasons.

America is again to be conquered; Sir George Collier having, like the man-mountain Gulliver, destroyed the whole naval force of the colonies at Penobscot, which being a famous port of which I had never heard, I suppose is the Plymouth of Blefuscu. There is a post, however, lost of great consequence, but if the Gazette does not own its importance, nobody will mind it.

When do you look southward? I am removing into my new house, and am much pleased with it; of myself I can only say, that for these two days I have mended. I am taking the bark, and think it is of service; but I have more ground to recover than is likely at sixty-two, and with so weak and shattered a frame, though the foundation is so strangely strong.

They are still writing *eloges* and verses on Voltaire at Paris, which would not be worth telling you, but as it has occasioned an admirable *bon-mot* of Madame du Deffand: she said that Voltaire *subissoit le sort des mortels, d'être après leur mort la pâture des vers.* There is no adding anything to this, but that I wish you were here.

1851. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Oct. 1779.

Mortifications never come single. Pain not only makes its *prerogative* felt, but deprives one of collateral satisfactions that might compensate. It annuls promises, and, like other imperial tyrants, roots out both wishes and virtues. I had set the remains of my heart on passing part of September at Nuneham, my dear Lord; but, after a very uncomfortable summer, in which I had scarce a day of health, I was confined to my couch the whole month with the gout, and have now the use but of one hand. Constitutional evils one learns to bear, but when the *constitution* is undermined, the breach lets in any enemy. In one word, my nerves are so shattered, that at last my spirits are affected, and I am less fit to wait on your Lordship and Lady Harcourt, from the feebleness of my mind, than of my poor person. I have not slept one night out

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

of my own houses since I had the honour of seeing you, not even at Park-place, which I had settled for my first stage to Nuneham. I can comfort myself only by your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's overflowing goodness to my nieces; and as they are of an age to taste the fulness of joy, they will be better company than one who, even in so favourite an Elysium, could not stifle many melancholy reflections; for indignation itself must sour into despondence, when it sees no prospect of any kind of redress. Shame and disgrace correct neither the million nor the master, and both seem to hope from defeat, what success alone used to delude fools into bestowing on knaves; but then, indeed, the latter had parts. Now they put me in mind of what Charles II. said of a silly preacher that was much admired in his parish; "I suppose," said his Majesty, "that his nonsense suits their nonsense." [1]

My sole hope at present is peace. Victory would rivet our chains; and next to the insolence of Tories, I abhor the insolence of the French. A peace would be so bad an one, that at least it would complete the ignominy of the last five years, and yet leave us some foundation to recommence our career, should the nation ever awake from its lethargy. In short, my dear Lord, decaying as I am, and bastardised as my country is, I cannot part with the darling visions of the liberty and glory of England. Is not it too grievous, too, to feel ourselves in as bad a plight as before the Union? Then Scotland and France were allies and harassed us; now they are foes, and yet we are in still greater peril! Paul Jones, to be sure, has been agreeable; and were Oxford not so near Nuneham, I should not have sighed if he could have sailed up the Isis, and committed sacrilege on some college plate, though good Dr. Johnson holds sacrilege the sin against the Holy Ghost, who, I suppose he thinks, has a peculiar fondness for silver basins and ewers. So, I daresay, does Bishop Butler, and of all sterling utensils, thinks the consecrated plate of Lambeth the holiest of holies. Did you hear, my Lord, that that renegade priest wrote to Sir Edward, that if there were any toleration allowable to opponents, your Lordship would deserve to be saved from the flames (he hopes to see) in Smithfield!

If my cousin, Miss Fauquier, is with you, ten thousand compliments to her. Tell her that the most pious of Princes, who in the tumult of civil affairs never neglects religion, has lately taken on

[1] Told by Burnet in his 'Own Times,' i. 449. Ed. 1823. Walpole was fond of the illustration. See vol. iv. p. 8, and letter to Ossory, 18 Oct. 1783, also 'Walpoliana,' i. 58.—CUNNINGHAM.

him the dispensation of Cathedral fees at Windsor, and endeavoured to put them on a new footing; but as hornets love honey, though they do not make it, one of the Canons withstands the Head of the Church, and defends the property of Faith against its defender.

Adieu, my best Lord; excuse and pity me. You will be charmed, I flatter myself, with poor Horatia, who is not at all well, but has behaved with a gentleness, sweetness, modesty, that are lovely. She has had no romantic conduct, concealed all she could, and discovered nothing she felt but by her looks. She is now more pleasing, though she looks ill, by her silent softness, than before by her youthful vivacity. Maria, almost as much wounded and to be pitied, carries off another kind of misfortune with a noble spirit. I will say no more, but that Mr. F. has had the confidence to make me a visit with his father-in-law. Luckily, the Duke arrived the moment after. F. said, "Do not let us keep you." "No, Sir," said I, "that you cannot do," and left them. Your Lordship is such a father to these poor girls, that I am sure you will forgive my troubling you with my anxieties about them.

I ought to make an apology for my whole letter, but, alas! my Lord, there are few to whom men of our sentiments can talk freely, and then it is no wonder that one's heart overflows through one's pen. Mine, you know, is devoted to your Lordship.

1852. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 11, 1779

It is very difficult to write at such a time as this, when there have been no events, are no good prospects, and when we have not abundance of friends in the post-offices abroad, through which one's letters are to pass. You must remember this position, and curb your impatience when you do not hear from me often.

Nothing has happened since my last, though near a month ago, but the surprisal of Stony Point by the Americans, where they made eight hundred prisoners. These events seem trifles to me, who look on America as totally lost, and do not take account of the modes by which we part with the ruins.

D'Orvilliers is certainly laid aside, though his disgrace is palliated. The combined fleets have as surely lost many thousands by the small-pox. We are bidden at this very time to expect their re-appearance. The year is so far advanced that we must know soon

whether any blow will be attempted, or the campaign conclude. In my own opinion, the principal effort will be against Ireland; but I do not trust my guesses a yard out of my sight, and keep still closer guard upon my ears, for almost everybody's mouth seems to have a design on one's senses. They tell one lies as solemnly as Swift related his voyages to Brobdingnag and Lilliput.

Notions there are, or have been lately, that the two Empresses wish to mediate a peace. I do believe that on France notifying to the Emperor that she should send some troops to Flanders to impose neutrality on the Dutch, he replied, *à la bonne heure;* but, for every squadron, he would despatch two. It cannot be the interest of the rest of Europe that the Bourbons should be sole sovereigns of the ocean; nor should I think that, so excellent a milch-cow as England has been to Germany, the latter would like to see the pail demolished, though the cow has kicked it down herself, when it was out of reach of everybody else. But adieu retrospect! it is as idle as prophecy, the characteristic of which is, never to be believed where alone it could be useful—*i. e.* in its own country.

I complained unjustly of your silence on Vesuvius, having since received the view of its terrors in the compass of a card, excellently done. I thank you much for it.

Of late—indeed, for the entire summer—I have been much out of order, and thought my constitution breaking fast; but it exerted its internal strength, and, when I was lowest, threw out the gout in several joints. In short, I have stamina of iron, in a case, as I used to call yours, of wet brown paper. I am now taking the bark, and find great benefit from it: nay, I am removing into a new house in London, that I bought last winter, as if I believed I had several years to come. It is in Berkeley Square, whither for the future you must direct. It is a charming situation, and a better house than I wanted—in short, I would not change my two pretty mansions for any in England: but I do not shut my eyes on the transitory tenure of them; though, if mortals did not coin visions for themselves, they would sit with folded arms, and take no thought for the morrow! I hold visions to be wisdom; and would deny them only to ambition, which exists by destruction of the visions of everybody else. Like Vesuvius, it overwhelms the fair face of the world, though to reign over cinders, and only lift its head above the desolation it has occasioned, and cannot enjoy.

1853. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 14, 1779.

I HAVE been desired, and never acquiesced with more pleasure, both for the sake of the recommended and of yours, to give a recommendatory letter to you for Mr. Windham, a gentleman of large fortune in Norfolk, who is obliged to go to Italy for the recovery of his health, which I most earnestly wish he may retrieve there.[1] He is young, but full of virtues, knowledge, and good sense; and, in one word, of the old rock—of which so few gems are left in this wretched country! His ill-health has prevented my being much acquainted with him, which I regret; but I well know his worth, and respect him exceedingly. In short, this is not a common letter of recommendation, but one that I shall confirm in my next by the post. I do not beg attentions for him; those you have even for the least deserving, from your own good-nature: but I entreat and advise you to get acquainted with Mr. Windham as fast as you can: your friendship will soon follow, and then he can want nothing in my power to ask,—unless his modesty should prevent his pressing you for letters of recommendation to other parts of Italy, and therefore I beg them for him, and, indeed, every service you can perform for him. My unlimited expressions will tell you how confident I am that your goodness will not be misplaced, as it has often been on travelling boys, and their more unlicked governors. Mr. Windham is not so young as to want to be formed, nor so old as to be insensible to the merit of others; and, therefore, I trust you will both be mutually pleased with each other. I envy him a little the satisfaction of visiting you; and, as he is a genuine Englishman, should lament his being forced to leave his own country, if I thought its honour or principles retrievable; and if I was not sure, by what I feel myself, that his health would be but more prejudiced by his remaining spectator of its blindness and disgraces.

1854. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, my inauguration day, Oct. 14, 1779.

I CAME to town this morning to take possession of Berkeley Square, and am as pleased with my new habitation as I can be with

[1] The Right Honourable William Windham, the statesman and friend of Dr. Johnson. He died in 1810.—CUNNINGHAM.

anything at present. Lady Shelburne's being queen of the palace over against me, has improved the view since I bought the house, and I trust will make your Ladyship not so shy as you were of Arlington Street.

I stopped at the turnpike, and sent to Grosvenor Place, but no tidings of you; however, as I shall stay in town till Saturday, I do not despair, having left a note for you. On Saturday I must return, as my Royalties leave the Pavilions on Sunday, and go to Blackheath.

The catastrophe of the poor old lady that you killed with kindness, has touched me exceedingly, not on her account, for having been contemporary of Lady Gouran, I conclude she was ancient; and then is not it charming to be smothered with joy? but I feel tenderly for your Ladyship, who must have suffered for your most innocent good nature.

I know nothing of the authenticity of Lord Macartney's and D'Estaing's letters, but believe they are thought genuine. Madame du Deffand in a letter I received yesterday, tells me they are very angry with the former for his great indiscretions on shipboard. He is at Limoges, where the Comte de Broglie has seen and commends him. I have written again to-night to my friend in his favour, and have told her that Lord Macartney has always been *deservedly* a great favourite of the ladies, and that as women govern in France, she must interest them in his behalf. I hope Lady Macartney will forgive me if he earns his release.

It is firmly believed that D'Estaing is gone with fourteen ships of the line to New York, where Arbuthnot has but seven. This will exceedingly shorten the American war. The combined fleets, now said to amount to seventy, are expected forth again. France, I am persuaded, is impatient to shorten the whole war. I have heard to-night at an Irish house, whereon I do not entirely pin my faith, that Lord North says he fears the Irish more than the English parliament. At the same place I was told that an American negotiator is here offering treaty, on condition of total silence on the word *independence*, and that his offer had been rejected. By an odd collision of circumstances, I did discover one truth, whatever the rest were. The Bishop of Derry had said there that he had proposed to the Administration to take off the test in favour of the Catholics. I do know that he has said that it was to be taken off; which I do not believe.

Now I am sending coals to Ireland, I must add an excellent story

I was told at the same place. That Lilliputian, Lady Newhaven, arriving at Tunbridge, desired Mrs. Vesey to explain to her and instruct her in the customs and news of the place. A man arrived ringing a bell—"for what?" said my lady; "Oh!" replied Mrs. Vesey, "to notify your arrival." At that instant the man bawled out, "At one o'clock, at Mr. Pinchbeck's great room, will be shown the surprising tall woman."

I hope these Hibernian tales will satisfy your Ladyship in the room of the Middlesex election, of which I know no more than the man in the moon.

The invitation to Farming-Woods will not want the codicil of Fotheringay, which I have seen, and Kirby,—I forget whose—if ever I recover my youth and spirits, or, at least, the latter, which is not very probable, while I remember the happy days of my spring, and the glorious days of my autumn! When the chill of winter is sharpened by the blasts of national disgrace, the only comfort of age is, that there are no more seasons to follow.

I know I do not wish for one more summer, if I am to pass it like the last! Nor can I see on what to build for expecting that the next will be more comfortable.

1855. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 21, 1779.

Perhaps you have been expecting that the combined fleets would take Ireland—perhaps they may, though not so easy, when a nation knows how to assert its rights; but in the mean time the Irish have chosen to take their kingdom into their own hands. They have twenty-eight thousand men in arms, *a committee* of whom attended the address to the Castle. I dare to say Mr. Edmund Burke does not approve of these proceedings, for the twenty-eight thousand are all Protestants. He would, I suppose, have liked better the advice of the Honble and right reverend father in God, Dr. Frederic Hervey, Bishop of Derry, who told a person I know that he had proposed to the Administration in England to take off the test from the Roman Catholics; and though it was rejected, he told another person that it was to be taken off.

It looks as if the naval campaign were over, but I do not know. The re-settlement of the Administration on the old bottom, only with some crossing over and figuring in, which you see in all the papers, I am told will take place.

You perceive by my date that I am removed into my new house. It is seeming to take a new lease of life. I was born in Arlington Street, lived there about fourteen years, returned thither, and passed thirty-seven more; but I have sober monitors that warn me not to delude myself.

My four nieces are at Nuneham. I saw Mrs. Harcourt on Tuesday at Sion Hill, come up to kiss hands for General Burgoyne's regiment; no doubt to the great joy of Bishop Butler. What charming children the little Carmarthens are!

I shall return to Strawberry on Monday for about a week, and then be chiefly in London. You will not tell me your own intended motions, and therefore I shall leave you to your own vagaries.

I heard t'other day of the '*World as it Goes*,' a poem published last spring, but which I had never seen. It is by that infamous Combe, the author of the 'Diaboliad.' It has many easy poetic lines, imitates Churchill, and is full as incoherent and absurd in its plan as the worst of the latter's. I do not wonder that it made no noise. Adieu! I send no compliments to your Anthems, for I am not in charity with them.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, Nov.* 12, 1779.

As I could not precisely tell you how I was to regulate my motions after the end of my Residence which concluded yesterday, I deferred writing till the present month, when I have to tell you that my motions will be no motions for three months to come; as the Dean and Chapter have allowed me to take another residence immediately, by which means I save the expense and trouble of removing my family, and lay up for myself a year and three quarters of liberty—a great sum you will say of such a commodity, which is at least equivalent to what the whole nation may promise itself the enjoyment of. However this be, I shall hope that while I remain in durance you will relieve and console me with your letters, which though I do not expect that the events which they relate will be of a comfortable cast, yet still they will be my very best amusement.

My Lord Carmarthen called upon me the other day in his return from the East Riding of this great county, where he had reviewed the whole coast, and found it so totally defenceless, that he had given a ball at Beverley on the occasion; he had withal added twenty men to the militia, and by the addition of two captains, had metamorphosed a paltry battalion into a complete regiment;—a very great military manœuvre, and which I doubt not will be attended with the most salutary consequences to this part of the island, especially as the corps with which they are to be embodied is at Coxheath. From York he retired to Kiveton, where, if he pleases, he may make another ball, and invite Lady Conyers to it, who I don't doubt will be pleased with such a fête; for you must know, at Lady Holdernesse's request, I have lent her my parsonage to reside in, while Mr. Byron[2] is raising recruits at Sheffield

[2] Captain Byron, the father of the great poet. He ran away with Amelia D'Arcy, Marchioness of Carmarthen (Lady Conyers in her own right), and afterwards married her. She died 26 January, 1784, and by Captain Byron was the mother of the Honourable Augusta Leigh—the poet's sister.—CUNNINGHAM.

1856. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1779.

I AM fortunate, Madam, that you have had a parenthesis of Bedfordshire neighbours between *fixed air, electricity, solar microscopes,* and every topic in and out of creation; and my barren narrow conversation, which is confined to few ideas and less knowledge than any man's who has lived so long, had opportunities of seeing so much, and yet has stored but up a heap of indigested trifles, and fathomed no earthly thing to the bottom, nor any heavenly one to the top—which, in truth, I believe, can be done a very little way: however, I honour natural philosophers in every one of their walks. They aim at enlightening mankind; most other professions at deceiving.

I have always heard that Bowood was magnificent: you will not wonder that accounts of noble palaces raise a sigh in my breast, not of envy, but remembrance!—but, alas! what will all our seats be but monuments of past splendour? As I should not like to die in an unfinished moment, though perhaps preferable to the catastrophe, I wish for peace, to know what is to be left. I doubt many turbulent scenes are to pass first; and, though one expected them much sooner, it is plain that causes have at last their effects; and, though one is often disappointed in the calculations of wisdom, folly and presumption produce their natural consequences. These multiply daily; and, being so numerous and so repugnant to each other, the medicines that would, as in bodily distempers, cure some, are

and Rotherham. This was by no means a pleasant sacrifice to make on my part, but I fancy you will think with me, that, as Lady Holdernesse asked it, I could not decently refuse.

I am at present revising and correcting a verse translation of Fresnoy's 'Art of Painting,' which I began when I was a boy at the University and have since, at intervals of five and sometimes ten years, proceeded upon. I believe I shall now complete it, and I fancy you will like it as well as a thing so very didactic will be capable of being liked. I forget whether I ever showed you any part of it; if not, pray do not set your stomach against it, for one day or other you must swallow the whole dose. I congratulate you on your removal to Berkeley Square. May you enjoy the comforts of your new situation as long as the Phidian work,[1] which is placed in the centre of that square, continues to be its chief ornament. This is a new prayer of my own, which I offer up even with more zeal than I do that which the wisdom of the legislature has lately tagged to that about wars and tumults.

Amen.

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[1] An equestrian statue of George III. by Wilton, long since removed.—CUNNINGHAM.

prejudicial to others. For instance, can your Ireland be redressed, without danger of producing insurrections here? Can the two islands jar, and not facilitate the views of France and Spain? I have reason to believe that the combined fleets will again appear before the conclusion of the campaign, though the Government thinks not. They still talk at Paris of invasion; and, having threatened it so often vainly, may have rendered it more facile by our incredulity. But what signify conjectures? As Cato says, Plato cannot end them, and the sword must.

My constitution, which set out under happy stars, seems to keep pace with the change of constellations, and fail like the various members of the empire. I am now confined with the rheumatism in my left arm, and find no benefit from our woollen manufacture, which I flattered myself would always be a resource. On Monday I shall remove to Shelburne Square, and watch impatiently the opening of the Countess's windows; though with all her and her Earl's goodness to me, I doubt I shall profit little of either. I do not love to be laughed at or pitied, and dread exposing myself to numbers of strange servants and young people, who wonder what Methuselah does out of his coffin. Lady Blandford is gone;[1] her antediluvian dowagers dispersed; amongst whom I was still reckoned a lively young creature. Wisdom I left forty years ago to Welbore Ellis, and must not pretend to rival him now when he is grown so rich by the semblance of it. Since I cannot then act old age with dignity, I must keep myself out of the way, and weep for England in a corner.

I am glad the appearances in Miss Fox are better. The elder Lady Albemarle has had a stroke of palsy, but is better. Lady Sarah came to town with her, and still looks prettier and fresher than an angel of Correggio.

Whither are your next motions, Madam? You lately talked of not seeing London until the roses appear. That is a little perverse, and very uncomfortable to me, since, seldom dining abroad, I should be happy to sit by your fire in the long evenings; but you scarce arrive till the *tourbillon* of Ranelagh surrounds you. Well! I must have done with wishes, which are foolish but in youth, when *time may* accomplish them.

[1] Maria Catherine De Jonge, a Dutch lady, was first the widow of the Marquis of Blandford, who died in 1731, and then in 1740, the widow of the celebrated Sir William Wyndham. See vol. iv. p. 271.—CUNNINGHAM.

1857. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 31, 1779.

Your last letter was so full of encomiums on my Tragedy, that, veteran author as I am, it made me blush. But I recollected your partiality, and then I accepted the motive with pleasure, though I must decline the exaggerations. It is plain that I am sincerely modest about it, for I not only never thought of its appearing on the stage, but have not published it. It has indeed received greater honour than any of its superiors; for Lady Di. Beauclerk has drawn seven scenes of it, that would be fully worthy of the best of Shakespeare's plays—such drawings, that Salvator Rosa and Guido could not surpass their expression and beauty. I have built a Closet on purpose for them here at Strawberry Hill. It is called the *Beauclerk Closet;* and whoever sees the drawings, allows that no description comes up to their merit—and then, they do not shock and disgust, like their original, the tragedy.

I am heartily glad you have had your nephew; I speak in the past tense, for he will certainly be set out on his return before this can reach Florence. It was uncommon merit to take so long a journey for a moment. I have sent you one to replace him, not to compensate; for a stranger cannot rival or equal your nephew: but one who, as soon as you are acquainted with him, will be a great comfort to you, from his virtues, sense, and manners. It is a young Mr. Windham, a gentleman of Norfolk, of a very considerable estate, who is in a bad state of health, and travels for it. I am not so much acquainted with him as with his character, which is excellent; and then he is a Whig of the stamp that was current in our country in my father's time. I do not always send you a tally to the letters of recommendation I am sometimes forced to give; but that which he carries to you, I confirm by this in all points. I advise you to be intimate with him; I will warrant the safety of his connection, and I beg you to assist him with recommendations wherever you can. He is a particular friend of my great-nephew, Lord Cholmondeley's cousin; but one I should have liked for my own friend, if the disparity of our ages would have allowed it; or if it were a time for me to make friends, when I could only leave them behind me.

Well; but you had rather I had been talking politics, or telling you news. The scene is not mended, for another is opened. Ireland,

taking advantage of the moment, and of forty thousand volunteers that they have in arms and regimented, has desired—that is, demanded—*free trade.* If we are not cured of our American visions at last, I hope we have learnt wisdom enough to perceive that prerogative is the weakest of all chimeras when opposed by *free men in arms:* it has cost us the diadem of the Colonies, as it did James II. those of three kingdoms; and therefore I trust we shall have more sense in Ireland. We still kick at the independence of America, though we might as well pursue our title to the crown of France.

Our fleet is at sea, and a most noble one. They still talk of the re-appearance of the combined fleets from Brest. It is probable that the winds of November will be the most considerable victors; for the season has been so very serene in general, that I think the equinoctial tempests, like the squadrons, have passed the autumn in harbour, and that they will all come forth together.

Lord Stormont has got the late Lord Suffolk's seals of Secretary. There were to have been other arrangements, but they are suspended; and it is said this new preferment is more likely to produce resignations than settlement: but I only tell you common report; which is not at all favourable to Lord Stormont's promotion. He has a fair character, and is a friend of General Conway; but he is a Scot, and Lord Mansfield's nephew, which the people mind much more than his character: the other advantage they will certainly pay no regard to at all. It is great pity unpopular things are done at such a moment!

Well! I trust I shall see General Conway within a week; I go to town to-morrow, expecting him. He has acted in his diminutive islet with as much virtue and popularity as Cicero in his large Sicily, and with much more ability as a soldier, and a commander—I am heartily glad he was disappointed of showing how infinitely more he is a hero.—The conclusion of my letter on Tuesday from London.

Nov. 1, *Berkeley Square.*

My letter is concluded, for I have nothing to add, but that the town says Lord Gower, President of the Council, will resign. Mind, I do not warrant this, nor anything that is not actually past.

1858. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 1.
Too late for the post.

You bid me send you all the news. Pray, of what sort would you have, Madam?—or do you act the innocent, and ask, though you know more than I do? Most likely, for I know no more than the herb-women in St. James's market. But I have no objection to being a dupe, if you have a mind I should be one. It is but one step below ignorance; so then, you do not know that the Lord President of the Council, such an age ago as last Wednesday, would not attend to swear in Lord Stormont, but walked in the Park during the solemnity, to the great scandal of all true Catholics.

In the next place your Ladyship, poor soul, does not know that the Paymaster of the Army holds all you poor souls very cheap who do not know that Lord Gower is *out*—why, has he resigned? has he resigned?—no, not yet, the King has not been in town.

I can gratify your Ladyship's curiosity or finesse no farther, for I truly know no more. Nay, I hold this State machinery or mystery in the same light as the Middlesex election. Objects that are gigantic on some horizons, are straws on others. When every part of the fabric totters, who can care whether a board starts in the floor of the drawing-room or closet, except some *joiner* who hopes his bill will be paid before the palace tumbles. Contrary to Lord Shelburne's opinion, there are reasons to think that the combined fleets will, if not yet sailed, still leave Brest, to the amount of fifty-two sail. Sir Charles Hardy has forty-three; but, come the blow this year or not, what is to amend our situation?—will more losses in other parts?—will greater difficulties and dissatisfactions at home? Will Ireland discourage France? Will new taxes encourage England? Will perseverance in measures that open new calamities everywhere, close them? Where can France or Spain be wounded by us? When we cannot protect Jamaica, can we reconquer America? When Ministers begin to be afraid of keeping their places, will they intimidate others—except by their example? If *anybody* will be his own Minister, will he not be his only Minister? They have long thrown all the blame on him, and now it looks as if they would throw their offices on him too.

I met Lady Bute this evening; she expects Lord Macartney[1] every

[1] Lady Bute's son-in-law.—CUNNINGHAM.

hour. Thank you for the sight of Lady Macartney's letter, Madam; but as I do not visit her, I cannot possibly on this occasion: it would look like assuming merit on good offices, which I could only attempt, but which I have not the smallest reason to think contributed to his return. Pray, Madam, do not call this, or anything of the kind, modesty and humility—it is only humiliation, which is but pride mortified.

I see myself a poor invalid, threatened with a painful and irksome conclusion, and mortified at seeing the decay of my country more rapid than my own. Ambition I never felt, but was content with being an individual in so free and splendid a nation. 'Tis all gone, Madam; and methinks one sinks in one's own estimation in proportion.

When I mention my woes, however, it is to excuse my frequent excuses, not to complain of my lot, which has been singularly happy and fortunate. I am so at this moment, for I expect General Conway this week; and I shall think him as much recovered, as if I had seen a bomb in the air over his head.

Nov. 2.

I have heard nothing new to-day. If you can explain what I have been telling you,—and if you are not in the secret,—nay, if you are, perhaps you may not understand it, be so good as to decipher to me; but I am in no hurry. When Titus was at the gates of Jerusalem, can one read with patience the squabbles of the Pharisees?

P.S. I must commend the honesty of your Milesians, Madam. If forty thousand Scots were in arms asking redress, do you think they would have let the East Indian fleet depart from Limerick before they were satisfied?

1859. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Monday night, Nov. 3.

St. John is a false prophet, and of the house of Bolingbroke; the angel of the Church of Philadelphia is a blind buzzard, and cannot see a yard beyond his nose. A heathen Cupid, with a bandage over his eyes, is worth a hundred of such blundering cherubim, that, like bats, fly about in the dark, and take a farthing candle for the sun. There, my Lady, there's Washington beaten, and Philadelphia taken! Commend me to Revelations! If your angel would be

seeing, why did not he put on his spectacles and hover over Arnold, who has beaten the vapouring Burgoyne, and destroyed his magazines? Carleton, who was set aside for General Hurlothrumbo, is gone to save him and the remains of his army, if he can. On Saturday night, not a Minister but was packing up: yesterday morning, they ran about, shouting and huzzaing, like madmen!

1860. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Tuesday, four o'clock.

I WROTE the above few lines last night, Madam, and then heard that no confirmation was come. I most humbly beg pardon of Monseigneur St. Michael, or St. Ithuriel, or St. George Fox, or whoever is archangel of Philadelphia, for too lightly crediting Bamber Gascoyne's or Port Glasgow's lies. I am this minute come to town, and find that the ship 'Argo' is as much arrived as the sloop 'Isis,' which turns out to be the 'Asia,' which is a large ship that has been long on a cruise. *It is believed*, from two or three letters from New York, that Washington has been beaten; yet nothing more is known of the action or its consequences; and as Howe has sent no account, it does not seem to be any great matter. The papers to-day are full of a resuscitation and victory of Burgoyne, which even the dates show to be manifest lies. It is doubted whether he will not have been forced to lay down his arms.

I received your Ladyship's letter, with the extract of your *beaufrère's*, this morning, and another short one this minute. I have not a moment's time to speak on either; but you may easily imagine all the sentiments the extract roused, and which wanted but a spark.

I must be excused, just now, from answering, or even thinking of, Mr. Selwyn's query about I don't know what. You have not told me where the letter is, nor to what admiral; and, to say truth, I am not sorry, for I never had less time to solve historic riddles of ages past.

If I learn anything certain by to-morrow night, I will certainly write again; your Ladyship and Lord Ossory must be anxious about Mr. F[itzpatrick] and Lord Chewton, and I will neglect nothing that can tend to quiet your alarm; though, I must own, I doubt whether this whole history of Washington is not coined, to balance for a moment the destruction of Burgoyne's army, and the loss of Canada that may follow.

1861. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Saturday evening, 6th. [*Nov.* 1779 ?]

If there is a sprig of truth left growing in Bedfordshire, I entreat your Ladyship to spare me a cutting, for there is not a leaf to be had in town for love or money; everything is so dear! and yet falsehood bears a still higher price. Jamaica is taken, and it is not; the combined fleets are sailed, and they are not; the East Indiamen are arrived, and are not; Lord Gower is out, and is not; Lord Northington is dead, and is not.

The edition of 'Gower,' privately printed at Glasgow, says he has been out these three weeks; but the critics say that cannot be so, for, &c.

Lord Weymouth's servants say he is to resign. Some say Lord Bathurst is to be President [of the Council] [1], and Lady Cranborne says, her Lord. Lord Macartney is come, but we have missed each other. They say he is dismally lean and black. George [Selwyn] and the signorina arrived last night. Lord Mountstuart is at Paris —or not. You see how friendly I am, Madam. Nobody tells you anything, and I tell you both sides of everything. Your humble servant, Janus.

P.S. Very good sport in Nubia.

1862. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 12, 1779.

I went this morning to Zoffani's to see his picture or portrait of the 'Tribune at Florence;' and, though my letter will not put on its boots these three days, I must write while the subject is fresh in my head. The first thing I looked for, was *you*—and I could not find you. At last I said, "Pray, who is *that* Knight of the Bath?"—"Sir Horace Mann."—"Impossible!" said I. My dear Sir, how you have left me in the lurch!—you are grown fat, jolly, young; while I am become the skeleton of Methuselah.

The idea I always thought an absurd one. It is rendered more so by being crowded with a flock of travelling boys, and one does not

[1] Earl Bathurst was made Lord President.—Cunningham.

know nor care whom. You and Sir John Dick, as Envoy and Consul, are very proper. The Grand-Ducal family would have been so too. Most of the rest are as impertinent as the names of church-wardens stuck up in parishes whenever a country-church is repaired and whitewashed.

The execution is good; most of the styles of painters happily imitated; the labour and finishing infinite; and no confusion, though such a multiplicity of objects and colours. The Titian's Venus, as the principal object, is the worst finished; the absence[1] of the Venus of Medici is surprising; but the greatest fault is in the statues. To distinguish them, he has made them all of a colour, not imitating the different hues of their marbles; and thus they all look alike, like casts in plaster of Paris: however, it is a great and curious work—though Zoffani might have been better employed. His talent is representing natural humour: I look upon him as a Dutch painter polished or civilised. He finishes as highly, renders nature as justly, and does not degrade it, as the Flemish school did, who thought a man vomiting, a good joke; and would not have grudged a week on finishing a belch, if mere labour and patience could have compassed it.

Mr. Windham, who I thought half-way to Florence, did not set out till last Monday. Of martial and political news I can tell you nothing new and positive. It does not appear that the combined fleets have come forth again. The mortality, I believe, has been great amongst them, and disagreement. The Spanish Admiral would not cede the post to Du Chaffaut. Daranda[2] and Monsieur de Sartine[3] were forced to go to Brest to obtain precedence for the latter. These two Civil Ministers have been principal incendiaries of the war. The present rumour is, that D'Estaing has taken Long Island, and blocked up Admiral Arbuthnot;—but the account comes from France.

The Irish seem more temperate; and, if we are so, it is to be hoped that harmony will be restored.

There have been no more resignations or promotions. Some changes are expected—but you will have no 'Anticipation'[4] from my shop; I deal only in past wares—and even those one cannot always

[1] This was an oversight; the Venus is in the picture.—WALPOLE

[2] The Spanish Ambassador at Paris.—WALPOLE.

[3] French Minister of the Marine.—WALPOLE.

[4] In the preceding year, Tickell's pamphlet by that title, giving drafts of speeches that would probably be made in the Parliament, and burlesquing most of the speakers, was published just before the meeting.—WALPOLE.

procure genuine. The Parliament is at hand, and may be a busy scene. I have had the sense to make it a season of repose to myself. It is the summer that in time of war is the high tide of anxiety to me: then I am trembling for my friends.

Well! but are you really so portly a personage as Zoffani has represented you? I envy you. Everybody can grow younger and plump, but I. My brother [Sir Edward Walpole] is as sleek as an infant, and, though seventy-three, is still quite beautiful. He has a charming colour, and not a wrinkle. I told him, when Lord Orford was in danger, that he might think what he would, but I would carry him into the Court of Chancery, and put it to the consciences of the judges, which of us two was the elder by eleven years?

16*th.*

Yes, it is the 16th, and not a syllable of news more. *Allez vous en, ma lettre;* Sir Horace expects you.

P.S. I do allow Earl Cowper a place in the Tribune: an English earl, who has never seen his earldom, and takes root and bears fruit at Florence, and is proud of a pinchbeck principality in a third country, is as great a curiosity as any in the Tuscan collection.[1]

Second P.S. I had just folded my letter, but not sealed it:—a knock at the door. Who do you think it was?—your nephew! Oh! how glad! Why, you have flown on the wings of the winds! —So he had—in such a storm on Saturday night, that I believed it tossed him over the houses, and set him down in Berkeley Square. He looks as well as possible. I read my letter to him, and he swears your portrait is as like you as two peas. Well! then I have no idea of you!

After exhausting Florence and England, I questioned him about Vesuvius: he repeated Sir William Hamilton's account of it to you, and I long to see it. I had not heard of the insurrection and phrenzy of the people. You would oblige me much if you would let it be transcribed, and send me a copy of his letter. As your nephew said justly, it was such a wonderful picture of nature and human nature in convulsion!

Adieu! I have not time to say more.

[1] Lord Cowper married at Florence in 1775, and died in 1789. His three children were all born at Florence.—CUNNINGHAM.

1863. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 14, 1779.

I MUST be equitable; I must do the world justice; there are really some hopes of its amendment; I have not heard one lie these four days; but then, indeed, I have heard nothing. Well, then, why do you write? Stay, Madam; my letter is not got on horseback yet; nor shall it mount till it has something to carry. It is my duty, as your gazetteer, to furnish you with news, true or false, and you would certainly dismiss me if I did not, at least, tell you something that was impossible. The whole nation is content with hearing anything new, let it be ever so bad. Tell the first man you meet that Ireland has revolted; away he runs, and tells everybody he meets,—everybody tells everybody, and the next morning they ask for more news. Well, Jamaica is taken; oh! Jamaica is taken. Next day, what news? Why, Paul Jones is landed in Rutlandshire, and has carried off the Duchess of Devonshire, and a squadron is fitting out to prevent it; and I am to have a pension for having given the earliest intelligence; and there is to be a new farce called the *Rutlandshire Invasion*, and the King and Queen will come to town to see it, and the Prince of Wales will not, because he is not old enough to understand pantomimes.

Well, Madam; having despatched the nation and its serious affairs, one may chat over private matters. I have seen Lord Macartney, and do affirm that he is shrunk, and has a *soupçon* of black that was not wont to reside in his complexion. George is so engrossed by the Board of Trade, that I have seen him but the morning after his arrival.

Mr. Beauclerk has built a library in Great Russell Street [Bloomsbury] that reaches half way to Highgate. Everybody goes to see it; it has put the Museum's nose quite out of joint.[1]

Now I return to politics. Sir Ralph Payne and Dr. Johnson are answering General Burgoyne, and they say the words are to be so long that the reply must be printed in a pamphlet as large as an atlas, but in an Elzevir type, or the first sentence would fill twenty pages in octavo. You may depend upon the truth of it, for Mr. Cumberland told it in confidence to one with whom he is

[1] Beauclerk's fine library was sold by auction immediately after his death.—CUNNINGHAM.

not at all acquainted, who told it to one whom I never saw; so you see, Madam, there is no questioning the authority

I will not answer so positively for what I am going to tell you, as I had it only from the person himself. The Duke of Gloucester was at Bath with the Margrave of Anspach. Lord Nugent came up and would talk to the Duke, and then asked if he might take the liberty of inviting his Royal Highness to dinner? I think you will admire the quickness and propriety of the answer:—the Duke replied, "My Lord, I make no acquaintance but in London," where you know, Madam, he only has levees. The Irishman continued to talk to him even after that rebuff. He certainly hoped to have been very artful—to have made court there, and yet not have offended anywhere else by not going in town, which would have been a gross affront to the Duke had he accepted the invitation.

I was at Blackheath t'other morning, where I was grieved. There are eleven Vander Werffs that cost an immense sum: half of them are spoiled since Sir Gregory Page's death by servants neglecting to shut out the sun. There is another room hung with the history of Cupid and Psyche, in twelve small pictures by Luca Giordano, that are sweet. There is, too, a glorious Claude, some fine Teniers, a noble Rubens and Snyders, two beautiful Philippo Lauras, and a few more,—and several very bad. The house is magnificent, but wounded me; it was built on the model of Houghton,[1] except that three rooms are thrown into a gallery.[2]

Now I have tapped the chapter of pictures, you must go and see Zoffani's 'Tribune at Florence,' which is an astonishing piece of work, with a vast deal of merit.

There too you will see a delightful piece of Wilkes looking—no, squinting tenderly at his daughter. It is a caricature of the Devil asknowledging Miss Sin in Milton. I do not know why, but they are under a palm-tree, which has not grown in a free country for some centuries.

15th.

With all my pretences there is no more veracity in me than in

[1] It was built in a year by James the architect, and was pulled down in 1787.—Cunningham.

[2] Sir Gregory Page, who died in 1775, was the personal friend of Vander Werff. At the sale of his pictures in 1816, eight of the Vander Werffs (there were twelve in all) were bought for the Louvre at the price of 33,000 francs. Two of his, Rubens' 'Ixion' and the portrait of 'Rubens and his first wife,' are now in the Grosvenor Gallery. The twelve pictures of the 'Story of Cupid and Psyche, by Giordano, and now at Hampton Court, were, I believe, Sir Gregory Page's.—Cunningham.

a Scotch runner for the Ministry. Here must I send away my letter without a word in it worth a straw. All the good news I know is, that the devil of a winter is come in that will send armies and navies to bed, and one may stir out in November without fear of being tanned. I am heartily glad that we shall keep Jamaica and the East Indies another year, that one may have time to lay in a stock of tea and sugar for the rest of one's days. I think only of the necessaries of life, and do not care a rush for gold and diamonds, and the pleasure of stealing logwood. The friends of Government, who have thought of nothing but of reducing us to our islandhood, and bringing us back to the simplicity of ancient times, when we were the frugal, temperate, virtuous old English, ask how we did before tea and sugar were known. Better, no doubt; but as I did not happen to be born two or three hundred years ago, I cannot recollect precisely whether diluted acorns and barley bread, spread with honey, made a very luxurious breakfast.

I was last night at Lady Lucan's to hear the Misses Bingham sing Jomelli's 'Miserere,' set for two voices. There were only the Duchess of Bedford, Lady Bute, Mrs. Walsingham, the Brudenels, Keenes, Lord Macartney, George Selwyn, Mr. Jerningham, and half a dozen Irish. The service lasted near three hours, and was so dull, instead of pathetic, that I was rejoiced that the worst *was over, and the two women had left the sepulchre.* The Duchess told me, that a habit-maker returned from Ampthill is gone stark in love with Lady Ossory, on fitting her with the new dress. I think they call it a Levite, and says he never saw so glorious a figure—I know that; and so you would be in a hop-sack, Madam—but where the deuce is the grace in a man's nightgown bound round with a belt?

Good night, Lady! I hope I shall have something to tell you in my next, that my letter may be shorter.

1864. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Codicil to my to-day's:—viz. Nov. 15, 1779.

I ENCLOSED the above to Lord Ossory, because it was not worth sixpence, and had sent it to the post, and then went to Bedford House, where, lo! enters Lady Shelburne, looking as fresh and ripe as Pomona. N.B. Her windows were not open yesterday, and to-day there was such a mist, ermined with snow, that I could not

see. I find it was not a habit-maker that was smitten with your Ladyship as a pig in a poke, but somebody else; but as her Grace's mouth has lost one tooth, and my ear, I suspect, another, I have not found out who the unfortunate man is.

Next enters your Ladyship's letter. I have seen my dignity of Minister to Spain—many a fair castle have I erected in that country, but truly never resided there. Voltaire's Dom Pedre is a poor performance indeed!

Mr. Cartwright, who, I humbly apprehend, is Mr. Carteret, is, I also apprehend, no better informed than his elder brother. So far from being gone to Cadiz, the French fleet, I believe, is gone to the hospital. Mr. Conway is not come; I trust from the obstinacy of a contrary wind. It blustered violently on Saturday night, and made me very uneasy; but I think it was a wind full in his teeth. I have expected him for this fortnight—three days before the frigate sailed. This is long enough for a codicil, in which one has nothing more to give.

1865. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 16, 1779.

Mr. Stonhewer wrote to you on business and could not get an answer, and was seriously alarmed that you was ill. I did not know whither to direct till you told me yesterday that you are hoarding a reversion of holidays at York; not very agreeable to me, who do not reckon on what is to accumulate; but in short, it is well you please me so much, for you often provoke me; so you do in translating Fresnoy. I do not care whether I shall like it or not; you will no doubt improve a middling poem, and what then? you will not insert a thousand new lights and ideas, that you would have conceived if you had written a new poem on painting, which you understand better than Fresnoy. A mighty merit it would have been in Raphael, after the *Transfiguration* (pray mind that word) to have copied Giotto! You are original, and I will like none of your copies. I do feel for the adulteration of your parsonage: it is monstrously unpleasant to have one's house tumbled and dirtied by strangers—and yet I do not see how you could refuse.

What can I tell you of news and politics? just now we are arrived at a moment of *grim repose*. The combined fleets have not come forth—I imagine from much sickness and mortality. Sir

Charles Hardy is crowing upon what may very properly be called his own dunghill. Though the French have given us many sound blows, they have certainly not come half up to their boasting and possibilities; yet it is likely that they will wind up the campaign with the capture of New York and Arbuthnot's fleet, which will make our obstinacy for the recovery of America still more heroic. Firmness retires where practicability finishes, and then obstinacy undertakes the business.

Ireland, I believe, will be brought to the same consistence, not with so much system and intention of driving it into rebellion, but—however we have so many data to go upon, that there would be no great honour in foretelling misfortunes.

There is another, and as yet little cloud about the sun, that may join and make other tempests come to explosion. Lord Gower has declared for resignation; Lord Weymouth wavers. I believe they have touched at many ports: I should be glad to see them shut out everywhere; whoever is betrayed and deserted by them has at least the merit of not being a traitor and running away. Distress and dissatisfaction do begin to murmur everywhere. Men do perceive that they cannot live upon loyalty and dissipation. General Burgoyne flatters himself that everybody will forget their own sorrows to be occupied with his. I will allow Lord Gower and Lord Weymouth to be mightily touched for him, but beg to be excused myself. I cannot forget how ready he was to be a great favourite.

I have very lately heard an account of the eruption of Vesuvius, and one part that was quite new to me. The people rose and were on the point of burning the theatre where the King was at the Opera—enraged at his insensibility.

Thank you for your prayer and your excellent account of Lord Carmarthen's review and ball.

1866. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. I don't know what day.

If you can be content with anything but news as fresh as mackerel, I will tell you as pretty a story as a gentleman can hear in a winter's day, though it has not a grain of novelty in it but to those who never heard it, which was my case till yesterday.

When that philosophic tyrant the Czarina (who murdered two emperors for the good of their people, to the edification of Voltaire,

Diderot, and D'Alembert,) proposed to give a code of laws that should serve all her subjects as much or as little as she pleased, she ordered her various states to send deputies who should specify their respective wants. Amongst the rest came a representative of the Samoieds: he waited on the marshal of the diet of legislation, who was Archbishop of Novogrod. "I am come," said the savage, "but I do not know for what." "My clement mistress," said his Grace, "means to give a body of laws to all her dominions."—"Whatever laws the Empress shall give us," said the Samoied, "we shall obey, but we want no laws."—"How," said the Prelate, "not want laws! why, you are men like the rest of the world, and must have the same passions, and consequently must murder, cheat, steal, rob, plunder," &c., &c., &c.

"It is true," said the savage, "we have now and then a bad person among us, but he is sufficiently punished by being shut out of all society."

If you love nature in its *naturalibus*, you will like this tale. I think one might make a pretty "Spectator' by inverting the hint: I would propose a general jail delivery, not only from all prisons, but madhouses, as not sufficiently ample for a quarter of the patients and candidates; and to save trouble, and yet make as impartial distinction, to confine the virtuous and the few that are in their senses. But I am digressing, and have not yet told you the story I intended; at least, only the first part.

One day Count Orlow the Czarina's accomplice in more ways than one, exhibited himself to the Samoied in the robes of the order, and refulgent with diamonds. The savage surveyed him attentively, but silently. "May I ask," said the favourite, "what it is you admire?" "Nothing," replied the Tartar: "I was thinking how ridiculous you are."—"Ridiculous," cried Orlow, angrily; "and pray in what?" "Why, you shave your beard to look young, and powder your hair to look old!"

Well! as you like my stories, I will tell you a third, but it is prodigiously old, yet it is the only new trait that I have found in that ocean *bibliothèque des Romans*, which I had almost abandoned; for I am out of patience with novels and sermons, that have nothing new, when the authors may say what they will without contradiction.

My history is a romance of the Amours of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of our Henry the Second. She is in love with somebody who is in love with somebody else. She puts both in prison. The Count falls dangerously ill, and sends for the Queen's Physician. Eleanor

hears it, calls for the Physician, and gives him a bowl, which she orders him to prescribe to the Count. The Doctor hesitates, doubts, begs to know the ingredients,—"Come," says her Majesty, "your suspicions are just—it is poison; but remember, it is a crime I want from you, not a lecture, go and obey my orders· my Captain of the guard and two soldiers shall accompany you, and see that you execute my command, and give no hint of my secret; go, I will have no reply:" the Physician submits, finds the prisoner in bed, his mistress sitting by. The Doctor feels his pulse, produces the bowl, sighs, and says, "My dear friend, I cannot cure your disorder, but I have a remedy here for myself," and swallows the poison.

Is not this entirely new? it would be a fine *coup de théâtre*, and yet would not do for a tragedy, for the Physician would become the hero of the piece, would efface the lovers; and yet the rest of the play could not be made to turn on him.

As all this will serve for a letter at any time, I will keep the rest of my paper for something that will not bear postponing.

20th.

Come, my letter shall go, though with only one new paragraph. Lord Weymouth has resigned, as well as Lord Gower. I believe that little faction flattered themselves that their separation would blow up Lord North, and yet I am persuaded that sheer cowardice has most share in Weymouth's part. There is such universal dissatisfaction, that when the crack is begun, the whole edifice perhaps may tumble, but where is the architect that can repair a single story? The nation stayed till everything was desperate before it would allow that a single tile was blown off.

1867. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 16, 1779.

You ought not to accuse yourself only, when I have been as silent as you. Surely we have been friends too long to admit ceremony as a go-between. I have thought of writing to you several times, but found I had nothing worth telling you. I am rejoiced to hear your health has been better: mine has been worse the whole summer and autumn than ever it was without any positive distemper, and thence I conclude it is a failure in my constitution—of which, being a thing of course, we will say no more—nobody but a physician is bound to

hear what he cannot cure—and if we will pay for what we cannot expect, it is our own fault.

I have seen Dr. Lort, who seems pleased with becoming a limb of Canterbury. I heartily wish the mitre may not devolve before it has beamed substantially on him. In the mean time he will be delighted with ransacking the library at Lambeth; and to do him justice, his ardour is literary, not interested.

I am much obliged to you, dear Sir, for taking the trouble of transcribing Mr. Tyson's 'Journal,' which is entertaining. But I am so ignorant as not to know where Hatfield Priory is.[1] The three heads I remember on the gate at Whitehall; there were five more. The whole demolished structure was transported to the Great Park at Windsor by the late Duke of Cumberland, who intended to re-edify it, but never did; and now I suppose

Its ruins ruined, as its place no more.

I did not know what was become of the heads, and am glad any are preserved. I should doubt their being the works of Torregiano. Pray who is Mr. Nichols, who has published the 'Alien Priories;' there are half a dozen or more pretty views of French cathedrals. I cannot say that I found anything else in the book that amused me —but as you deal more in ancient lore than I do, perhaps you might be better pleased.

I am told there is a new 'History of Gloucestershire,' very large, but ill executed, by one Rudder—still I have sent for it, for Gloucestershire is a very historic country.

It was a wrong scent on which I employed you. The arms I have impaled were certainly not Boleyn's. You lament removal of friends—alas! dear Sir, when one lives to our age, one feels that in a higher degree than from their change of place! but one must not dilate those common moralities. You see by my date I have changed place myself. I am got into an excellent, comfortable, cheerful house; and as, from necessity and inclination, I live much more at home than I used to do, it is very agreeable to be so pleasantly lodged, and to be in a warm inn as one passes through the last vale. Adieu! Yours ever.

[1] Hatfield Peverell in Essex. The three Hatfield heads were engraved by J. T. Smith.—CUNNINGHAM.

1868. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 21, 1779.

I AM sorry, Madam, to inform you, if you have not heard it, that the troubles in Ireland ripen. An express came yesterday, that the independent army had invested the House of Commons, and forced the members to take an oath of voting for Free Trade and a short money bill. The mob, too, *palliser'd* the houses of the Attorney-General Scott[1] and Sir Henry Cavendish, who had ventured to plead a little for the English Government. This is all I know yet, for I have been confined again these three days with the gout in my foot, and was not out of bed to-day till three o'clock.

Lord Weymouth has resigned, and quits his *bureau* to-morrow. This, I suppose, was what your Ladyship meant by saying you heard the *sheath was absolutely thrown away;* if it is, I believe Lord Weymouth will run after it, for I think the sword will never be his weapon.

Nor can I admire any, who, after doing all the mischief they could, cry out Fire! That they will go to extremities I do not doubt—what principle should restrain them?

A few answers to your last and I have done, for I am a little in pain. I have not seen the Prologue and Epilogue to 'The Critic,' but am now very impatient, for I hear they are Mr. Fitzpatrick's, and will answer I shall admire them. If your Ladyship has copies, I beg you will let them be transcribed and sent to me incontinently.

The story you have heard of a Royal amour, I fancy, was founded on a letter that has made much noise, and was delivered by mistake to a wrong person. The circumstances are too numerous for a letter, and were only the gossiping of two girls, who did not expect to have their correspondence rehearsed to the Ladies of the Bedchamber.

La Signorina I have not seen, and, in truth, did not ask to see her. I love David too well, not to be peevish at an Abishag of eight years old.[2]

Should I hear anything before to-morrow night, it shall make a P.S., but I wrote to-day lest I should not be able to-morrow.

[1] Lord Clonmel, afterwards (1784) Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench in Ireland.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] George Selwyn and his little pupil, Mademoiselle Fagniani.—CUNNINGHAM.

22nd, from my bed.

P.S. I have had a bad night, though I expected a most tranquil one, for, about eight in the evening, as Lady Aylesbury and Mrs. Damer were sitting with me, the door opened and entered General Conway. As the wind had been violent, I was comforting myself that it was contrary; but he had landed at Portsmouth the night before, after being blown to Plymouth. After his servants and baggage were embarked, the frigate was very near being lost.

I have seen nobody but him to-day, so cannot tell any more news.

1869. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 28, 1779.

I DID not forget you on the Parliament meeting, though you have not received proof of my recollection. Being ill in bed, and not able to write myself, I dictated a line to your nephew, to beg that, if anything very particular should happen on Thursday, the first day of the session, he would write to you the next day, which would have been my post-night. Your nephew was not in town, nor was expected till to-day; and, having the gout in both feet and knees, I continued in too much pain to write myself, or even to dictate: besides that, in that situation, I had learnt few or no circumstances of the debate, except that little or no fluctuation had happened in the quintessence of debates—numbers on the division. I remember a man of humour proposing that, for the convenience of the greater part, the division should always precede the debate; that only they who liked to talk should stay and make their speeches, which he supposed never determined or altered the several votes: no compliment to oratory, and still less a panegyric on corruption and prejudice!

In fact, a very considerable defalcation from the standing majority had been expected. The inglorious and unprosperous events of the summer; the general discontent and dissatisfaction that are arisen; but, above all, the crack that has happened in the Administration itself by the resignations of Lord Gower and Lord Weymouth, which at least implied apprehension in them that the edifice was falling, and which, being timed at the very eve of Parliament, were certainly not intended to prop it; and it having been as artfully divulged, that endeavours had been made to terrify Lord North from his post, by assuring him he could not maintain it: such a concurrence of

untoward circumstances naturally suggested a vision of much diminution of the majority; and such a vision naturally is apt to realise it, by the caution of such prudent senators as love to proceed on sure ground, and absent themselves till the prospect is more clear.

Lord North, however, had courage to stand the issue of a battle; his troops were better disciplined than had been expected, and the Lords Gower and Weymouth found that nobody had been frightened but themselves. What the latter feared, no mortal can guess; for he is actually run away to Longleate, and no persuasions could retain him. The deserted would not impeach him for what they had co-operated in; and, if beaten, the victorious would have spared him for the merit of having opened a gate to their success.—But enough of such a recreant!

The other deserter has not yet gone over to the enemy. He will wait, no doubt, till some new fact leads him to thinking it much more heinous than all that is past. In the mean time, to console themselves for the little mischief their flight has occasioned, their small squadron of friends affect to impute the bulk of the majority, on Thursday last, to the intemperance of the Amendment proposed by the Opposition to the Address. The vacancies are supplied by Lord Bathurst as President, and by Lord Hillsborough as Secretary of State. You must not expect, however, that the storm is quite dispersed. Disappointment is no composer to some minds.

Fortune has shown us some partiality. D'Estaing's fleet of twenty-two ships has been dispersed, and probably suffered considerably, by a terrible tempest that lasted for three days off Carolina. Thus, the West Indies are likely to be saved. The danger is, that this favourable event may reinvigorate our impracticable phrenzy of reconquering America; the most certain way of our not recovering it. Ireland is in great danger, if we apply our American ideas to it; but, alas! experience and misfortune have not yet operated as medicines!

That old meteor, Wilkes, has again risen above the horizon, when he had long seemed virtually extinct. The citizens, revolted from the Court on the late disgraces, have voted him into the post of Chamberlain of London, a place of fifteen hundred pounds a year. How Massaniello and Rienzi and Jack Cade would stare at seeing him sit down as comfortably as an Alderman of London!—If he should die of a surfeit of custard at last!

I had forgotten *myself;* but you see I am much better to-day. My pains are gone off, and I rose to-day at noon, after keeping my

bed three days. Sufferings have taught me to estimate their absence at the rate of health and happiness.

Thank you for the poem of Mrs. Montagu on Shakespeare, which your nephew brought me. I do not admire the poetry, though in Italian, which methinks it is difficult to prevent from sounding poetical; but I like much the author's just attack on Voltaire for having pillaged Shakespeare, at whom he died railing.

29*th.*

If one meteor is re-illuminated, another is extinct. Lord Lyttelton is dead suddenly. *Suddenly* in this country is always at first construed to mean, *by a pistol.* But it is not known yet whether Mars or Venus supplied the ammunition; and I may not be very accurate in dates, though they lie within the compass of three days. He had on Thursday made a violent speech against the Administration, under which he held the post of Chief Justice in Eyre; but this was not new: he was apt to go point-blank into all extremes without any parenthesis or decency, nor ever boggled at contradicting his own words. The story given out is, that he looked ill, and had said he should not live three days; that, however, he had gone to his house at Epsom that night, or next day, with a caravan of nymphs; and on Saturday night had retired before supper to take rhubarb, returned, supped heartily, went into the next room again, and died in an instant.[1] I should have said more perhaps on Lord Lyttelton, but was interrupted, and told a fresh event that will stifle the other. Charles Fox has been slightly wounded in the side this morning in a duel. Adam, a Scot, and nephew of the architect's, a man of a very suspicious character, has for two or three years distinguished himself by absurd speeches,—often, though a Scot, pointed against Lord North: but on Thursday last he uttered a most ridiculous one, in which he said, that, though he had left the House last year prepossessed *against* Administration, yet he had been converted *to* them by reading the examinations of the Generals; who, he perceived, had been more to blame than the Ministers. This rhapsody Fox had ridiculed in the highest degree with infinite wit and argument. Adam felt the sarcasm to the quick, and after the debate asked an explanation. Fox told him he had meant no personal invective, and they parted. At three this morning Adam sent an officer to

[1] Lord Lyttelton's house at Epsom was called Pitt Place. The "caravan of nymphs" included Margaret Amphlett and her sister Christian Amphlett, both of whom are liberally remembered by Lord Lyttelton in his Will.—CUNNINGHAM.

Fox, to say he had read a very injurious detail of the affair in the newspapers, and desired Fox to contradict it. He wrote an answer, saying he was not answerable for newspapers; but assured him, under his hand, that he had meant nothing injurious, and Adam might show that reply. Not content, Adam returned, that his *friends* were not satisfied, and that Mr. Fox must print the letter. "That is too much," said Fox; and at eight this morning they went into Hyde Park. Adam fired first, and the ball grazed Fox's side slightly; but he fired, and then said, "Mr. Adam, are you satisfied?" You will feel horror at the reply. "No," said Adam, "you must print your letter." Still, "No," said Fox. Adam fired again, and missed; and then Fox fired in the air, and it ended.[1]

P.S. As my letter was sealing, to which my paper would not let me make any conclusion, I received yours of the 13th; to which, being just got into bed, I cannot reply now. All I will say is, that great part of your news is true; many of the Spanish vessels are returned home; D'Estaing's fleet is dispersed; I know nothing of Martinico and their Domingo-men.—Your nephew was with me this morning: I rejoice in what you tell me of his views.

1870. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1779.

THOUGH you command, Madam, it would be impertinent and ridiculous to talk of myself, when at the same time, the post will bring you Lord Ossory's account of Mr. Fox's duel. Could such an old story as the gout expect to fill a cranny of your attention at such a moment? Would not you hate anybody or letter that could not answer fifty questions you want to ask in a breath? I would answer them beforehand if I were not just got into bed with a little return

[1] This is not correct. The following is the statement of the two seconds, General Fitzpatrick and Major Humberston:—"Mr. Adam fired, and wounded Mr. Fox, which we believe was not at all perceived by Mr. Adam, as it was not distinctly seen by either of ourselves. Mr. Fox fired without effect; we then interfered, asking Mr. Adam if he was satisfied. Mr. Adam replied, 'Will Mr. Fox declare he meant no personal attack upon my character?' Upon which Mr. Fox said, this was no place for apologies, and desired him to go on. Mr. Adam fired his second pistol without effect; Mr. Fox fired his remaining pistol in the air; and then saying, as the affair was ended, he had no difficulty in declaring that he meant no more personal affront to Mr. Adam than he did to either of the other gentlemen present. Mr. Adam replied, 'Sir, you have behaved like a man of honour.' Mr. Fox then mentioned that he believed himself wounded; and, upon opening his waistcoat, it was found it was so, but, to all appearance, slightly."—WRIGHT.

of pain. Oh, and Lord Lyttelton[1]—in about three hours your Ladyship will want to know all about him too. Would I could satisfy you, but just now I am not able, and therefore, after thanking you a thousand times, I must bid myself good night, and will answer your letter as soon as it is in my power.

1871. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1779.

I DESIRED Mr. Stonhewer on Saturday to write to you, and to tell you why I could not. From him or from the newspapers, who know everything as well and as soon as anybody, you will have learnt that the edifice of the majority does not, like the chief temple of the Philistines, rest on two slight pillars, which being removed, the whole fabric fell to pieces, but when pilasters take themselves for buttresses, no wonder they are mistaken. Such has been the fate of the Lords Gower and Weymouth, and I wish everybody saw them in as contemptible a light as I do. The last has attempted to avoid no degree of shame, for he is actually run away to Longleat. However, they do not give up the game, but have a matadore still to play a *black ace*.

So you think that we are still living on Thursday's debate and division! You are extremely mistaken, good Sir; we have fresh events every morning, not revolutions indeed, nor sea-fights, nor rebellions—all in good time. But we can furnish you every day with occurrences so strange and unexpected, that you folks in the country would live on a single one for three months. Come, what do you like? what do you choose? Is not a sudden death very comfortable in a long winter's evening over a sea-coal fire? or is a duel more to your taste? What young profligate would you wish hurried out of the world in an instant—I mean only as a beautiful flower that would close a sermon delicately, that you are composing on the debaucheries and gaming of the age? Would not there be still more dignity in it, if he were a young peer? or shall he be a fashionable orator? or a grave judge—or shall he be all three? You are a little difficult, Mr. Mason, and yet in these times much may be done to serve a friend. Or what think you of a single combat

[1] "Thomas, Lord Lyttelton, was a meteor, whose rapid extinction could not be regretted. His dazzling eloquence had no solidity, and his poetry no graces that could atone for its indelicacy." *Walpole's Works*, vol. i. p. 540.—CUNNINGHAM.

seasoned with a little spice of premeditated assassination *à la* Sam Martin, which pray observe does not signify Saint Martin.

Well, then, I will try to please you if I can. Know then that on Saturday night one of His Majesty's Chief Justices in Eyre,[1] after having vented a warm philippic on Thursday *against* the Administration, and after having retired to his house at Epsom on Friday, attended only by four virgins, whom he had picked up in the Strand, and after having supped plentifully on the said Saturday on fish and venison, finding himself indisposed, went to bed, rung his bell in ten minutes, and in one minute after the arrival of his servant, expired! But what signifies sudden death without forewarning? He had said on Thursday that he should die in three days, had dreamt so and felt it would be so: on Saturday he said, "If I outlive to-day I shall go on;"—but enough of him. My next event is worth ten of this.

As Lord Lyttelton had spoken *against* the Ministers, Mr. Adam, nephew of the architects, spoke *for* them. It is supposed that whenever Scotland was dissatisfied with, pooh! I mean, not satisfied by, Lord North, Adam was delegated to run at him; and now and then might have a plenary indulgence from the Pope for talking the language of opposition, in order to worm out secrets—poor souls! as if they had any!

Well, on Thursday he made a most absurd speech in favour of the Court, which Charles Fox tore piecemeal with infinite humour and argument, which tortured the patient so much that next day he asked an explanation. Fox assured him he had meant nothing personal, but had a right to dislocate his arguments, and he was satisfied; but on Sunday he sent a Scotch major[2] to Fox to complain of the state of the debate in the newspapers, and to desire Mr. Fox would contradict and declare his good opinion of him. Fox returned for answer, that he was not responsible for accounts in newspapers; that it was harder still if on their misrepresentation he must give a good character of any man they abused: he again declared he had

[1] On the singular circumstances said to have attended Lord Lyttelton's death, see Maurice's 'Memoirs of an Author,' part iii. p. 29. "In a dream, there appeared, standing at the foot of his bed, a beautiful diminutive female figure, with a small bird perched on her finger. The apparition announced to him that the *third* night, precisely at twelve, his death would take place. He was found dead by his valet, with his watch in his hand, and the hand just past the fatal hour." See also 'Memoirs of Frederick Reynolds,' vol. ii. pp. 192—196; and 'Gentleman's Mag., Sept. 1837. There is an account of him by Mr. Pennington, in the 'Memoirs of Miss Carter,' and in 'Chatham Correspondence,' vol. iv. p. 344.—Mitford. For further particulars consult the 'Quarterly Review' for December 1851 (No. 179), 'Boswell' by Croker, p. 763, and Sir Walter Scott's 'Demonology and Witchcraft.' The writer in the Quarterly endeavours to prove that Lyttelton was Junius.—Cunningham.

[2] Major T. Mackenzie Humberston.—Cunningham.

intended no offence, and that Mr. Adam was welcome to show that declaration to anybody. After consult had, Adam returned that Mr. Fox must print that recantation. "Hold!" said Fox, "not so far neither."—Oh! I forgot the principal circumstance of all: Adam added that his *friends* would not be satisfied under less than publication. At eight this morning they went into Hyde Park, Fox with Fitzpatrick, Adam with his Major Humberston for seconds. Adam fired, and the ball wounded Charles Fox's side, though very slightly: he then fired, missed, and said, "Now, Mr. Adam, are you satisfied?"

Near as you are to the Tweed you will not guess the reply, "No," said Adam; "you must still print your letter." Nothing could be more unjust, more unfair. They had fought because Fox would *not* consent to that pretension. Fox with the same firmness and temper with which he had conducted himself through the whole affair peremptorily refused, and the bloodhound again fired, but missed, and then Fox fired into the air and it ended.

An odd circumstance larded this history. Humberston was waiting for him at Fox's house, and so was Sheridan: when Charles was come home and had despatched the bravo, Sheridan said, "Pray who is that ill-looking fellow? he looks like the carrier of a challenge."

Well, I am sure I have made amends for having been punished by the gout, and here too have I been writing in bed till eleven at night, but thank you I am better and was in the other room from twelve till six to-day, when my pains returned; yet finding them easier at nine, I was eager to be the first to tell you two such strange events. Half the town have been reading the latter correspondence in Charles Fox's room the whole morning, and I received it piping hot, except that I have abridged it a little, from a very accurate reporter. Adieu, or the bellman will be gone.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, Dec.* 7, 1779.

I CANNOT enough thank you for your most friendly attention to me in combating even pain itself to give me pleasure by your correspondence. I assure you the pleasure I receive is great, and I only lament that I can make you no return, for the dulness of this place is inconceivable. We are, however, going to bestir ourselves a little, and there are wheels in motion towards bringing this large county together to a general meeting. Whether the measure will be carried into execution, I am not yet certain; if it is, it will have this merit, that it arises entirely from a set of private independent gentlemen, without any lordly leader whatever. Its object will be to consider the critical state of our landed property, &c., and to petition, and perhaps remonstrate accordingly. I hear you say, what will all this signify? Have you not petitioned and remonstrated before? and pray what came of them? True, and as little will come of what we shall now do. I know all this; yet it will show that we have not absolutely lost all feeling, and it will tend to put certain folks still more in the

1872. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Thursday evening, Dec. 2, 1779.

Your Ladyship must excuse another short answer to the letter I have this moment received, for I am extremely weak and low, the consequence always of the fever going off. My pains are gone everywhere but in my right arm and hand, which last is uneasy enough; but then I sleep and doze exceedingly; a most fortunate faculty in one that is so long decaying.

I am vexed that Lord Ossory or your Ladyship should think it necessary to make an apology for his not calling on me before he went: I thought he called very often in so short a space; and I am always upon my guard not to let my tiresome illnesses torment others too. How should Lord Ossory, who comes but for a moment, and has a thousand friends, amusements, and politics, to drink at a

wrong. Last post brought me a weighty packet from my friend Fraser, so heavy, that I wonder he was not ashamed to load the post with it. All, however, is not gold that is ponderous. 'Twas Mr. Eden's letters to Lord Carlisle, and I have read them, and am not comforted by them so much as his correspondent was either by them or his new sinecure. He tells us on the comfortless side that the combined fleets are much larger than ours; and in the very next page, to comfort us, that our present fleet is beyond compare the best in the world. Throw such comfort "to the dogs, I'll none of it!" All I can learn from it is, that though we are already taxed more than ever we were, we are capable of paying still greater taxes, and therefore we ought to pay them freely, without any retrospect, to those who have of late imposed them to such ineffectual purpose. Suppose Lord Lyttelton had recovered the breaking of his blood-vessel, and a physician had told him, "My Lord, you lost two quarts of blood, and the weakness of your blood-vessel was occasioned by your debaucheries. You ought, therefore, to go on in your debaucheries, because the human body contains many gallons of blood." His Lordship perhaps might have approved the advice, but I trust the nation are not all of them Lord Lytteltons. O mercy on me! a letter just come from Alderson, and he tells me that the west wind which blew so violently on Thursday night has tore off a great deal of my fine Westmoreland slate; that the slate, in falling, has broken all the panes in the very window of that best bedchamber where my Lady Conyers and Mr. Byron conjugally reposed; that not only my Lady, but even her military spouse, were greatly alarmed, and obliged to quit their apartment; and that it still rains so violently, that it is doubted whether the roof can be repaired before the inside ceiling is damaged. To this sad detail I hear you cry very composedly "a just judgment!" However, I find they are not so frightened but they will still keep their head-quarters at Aston, though Mr. Byron has received orders to remove his recruiting party to Beverley, which by the nearest roads (which are now impassable) is fifty miles, and by York above eighty. No matter, his Majesty's service will go on full as well as ever it did for all that, and so ends my Aston gazette extraordinary.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Most cordially yours,

W. Mason.

Pray in return give me a better account of your gout than I have of my house.

draught, have time to come and sip my dregs of gout? Surely, surely, Mr. Fox's duel was sufficient to occupy him wholly for two days. Of all duels, on true or false record, this was the most perfect! So much temper, sense, propriety, easy good-humour, and natural good-nature, on a base of firmness and spirit, never were assembled. For Mr. Adam, I cannot describe him, as I never extracted malevolence out of the fogs of the Highlands.

Of poor Lady Jane [Scott], I own, I did not care to speak to your Ladyship, as I knew how you would lament her; nor can I tell you much now about her death or Will. I think her low spirits began before Lady Blandford's death; yet that might increase them. They increased to the greatest degree, and at last she died of obstinately refusing nourishment. The *Greenwich* did pretend to take care of her; I don't know whether she did, but I know she talked brutally about her. I have heard that Lady Jane has left her fortune to Lady Frances, but am not sure.

I have heard Mr. Tickell's poem read once, and thought the beginning very bad. The allusions are not at all just, but forced into the service by vile puns. Towards the end there seems some very pretty lines; but, upon the whole, *à quoi bon? à quel propos?* I believe it was meant for a satire, but the author winked, and it flashed in the pan.

I have not seen the Prologue, Madam, but should seriously take it very kindly if you would send me a copy; indeed I want amusement.

I have not breath to dictate more, and must take my leave.

1873. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 6, 1779.

I RETURN both poems, Madam, with the fidelity and gratitude which they, the author, and your Ladyship, deserve from me. The lines to 'Delia' are very poetic, dressed with all the genteel ease of Mr. Fitzpatrick. The Prologue [to 'The Critic'] is charming; and a short, just, and compendious history of the English stage.

I am told my account of Lady Jane's Will was wrong, and that she has left her original 10,000*l.* to the Duke of Buccleuch, and to Lady Frances, only 250*l.* a year, Petersham, and 1000*l.* in money; so the public had made a better Will for her.

I lament not being able to be to-day where I seldom wish myself,

in the House of Commons; but if I opened the current of regrets they would soon swell to a torrent; and I had better bid your Ladyship good night, since I have nothing new to tell you.

1874. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 11, 1779.

The very morning after I wrote to you last, the gout seized my right hand and still keeps possession, not that I have had anything particular to tell you; the papers are full of, and accurate enough in debates, and by them majorities are no whit affected. The two seceding Lords [Gower and Weymouth] made a very silly figure; one has seceded from his own secession and speech, and the other from his secession into the country. MacDonald,[1] the former's son-in-law, has made as absurd, though not so black a figure as Adam. He abused Lord North in very gross, yet too applicable terms, and next day pleaded he had been drunk, recanted, and was all admiration and esteem for his Lordship's talents and virtues; so much for Parliament!

Lord Harcourt has told you a better anecdote than any of these: there is no improving upon it.

You bear the effects of the storm with great philosophy indeed. Some folks, I see, push old proverbs to both extremities and can touch nothing, but they bring a *new* house upon their heads. Old ones, however more solid, tumble too at a certain fatal touch. The removal of the south terrace at Windsor has endangered, ay, cracked that whole range of buildings, and the grantees of the lodgings have removed their goods and furniture lest all should be crushed.

I am glad you have tasted of Mr. Eden's four plates of Blanc Manger stewed with caraway comfits. Though they must have soon palled your stomach, never was such an insipid *entremêts* dished up by a gentleman confectioner.

Mr. Tickell's hodge-podge of Partrides and House of Commons is as silly, though afterwards, here and there, there are eight or ten pretty lines. I have read Sheridan's 'Critic,' but not having seen it, for they say it is admirably acted, it appeared wondrously flat and old, and a poor imitation; it makes me fear I shall not be so much charmed with 'The School for Scandal' on reading, as I was when I saw it.

[1] Archibald MacDonald, brother of Lord MacDonald, and M.P. for Hindon.—Cunningham.

If you can send us any stories of ghosts out of the North, they will be very welcome—Lord Lyttelton's vision has revived the taste; though it seems a little odd that an apparition should despair of being able to get access to his Lordship's bed in the shape of a young woman, without being forced to use the disguise of a robin-red-breast.

If your County remonstrate, it will be met halfway by the South. They talk of a like rebuke from Hampshire, where there is already a sturdy opposition to the court candidate, as there is in Devonshire too. Ireland I fear is going much faster, but with what are not we threatened? yet perseverance in the American war is at this moment avowed! Is it possible to write on, when one has told you the excess of distraction?

1875. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 14, 1779.

When Lord Ossory is in town, my dear Madam, my letters are useless; and, when I can only dictate, they are not only *gênées* and insipid, but force me to exert my faint voice more than I can afford. I am now trying to scratch out a few lines with my muffled hand; and the effort must be accepted in lieu of length. In fact, I am impatient to thank your Ladyship and Mr. Fitzpatrick for his intended offering to the armoury at Strawberry, where it shall be consecrated on the 4th of November, a more solemn holiday there than the 5th. I recollect a story of James I., who, being seized with the colic as he was hunting, stepped into a cottage, and complaining, the good woman of the house recommended a bullet to him to swallow, which she assured him had done wonders, and had often passed through her whole family. I will preserve Mr. Fitzpatrick's present carefully, that so *sovereign* a medicine may have a chance of returning whence it came; and, in case of need, of going through all the Scots that deserve it.

You know, Madam, I can give you no account of new beauties but what I hear: Miss Gore is much admired. Miss Lennox is said to be very well, but no more.

Lord Ossory's speech was thought very sensible and proper, and to have no fault but its brevity, which is never charged on speeches that are not liked. Hitherto all goes well for Ireland: I fervently hope the Irish will be as reasonable.

Recommend books to you, Madam!—why, the manufacture is lost both in England and France! I believe nothing will be printed soon but ship news; and Wilkes's and Temple Luttrell's speeches, which they print themselves.

If Lord Ossory is returned to-day, as I conclude, pray tell him, Madam, that I shall have a gallery of Dusseldorp for him at the original rate of six guineas.

You see, Madam, there was no such miracle in Buckinger[1] writing with his stump! I have some notion that all the limbs and members may serve as coadjutors to the others; but I will not surmise how far that may be carried, lest old folks like me should, as they are apt, attempt ridiculous experiments.

1876. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 20, 1779.

Since mine of the 30th of last month, I have not been able to write a line myself; nor can yet: the gout took and keeps possession of my right hand, and returned last week into the foot, knee, and wrist of the same side. I think it is again departing; but, like war, it makes many skirmishes after one thinks the campaign is over. Your nephew, I hope and believe, has written more than once in the interval; and, I suppose, given you a sketch of Parliamentary transactions, which, though warm enough, have produced no material event or alteration. The most important object of all even now in question has not received the least rub; and, which is better still, promises all appearance of being crowned with success. Great concessions to Ireland have been adopted, are sailing through both Houses with favourable gales, have been notified to Ireland, and have pleased there, and we trust will restore harmony between these islands. We have the sense to trespass on the formalities of Christmas, and for once prefer wisdom to going out of town the moment it is fashionable.

The holidays, however, are not without subjects of rejoicing; we have taken from Spain a sturdy fort on the Mosquito shore, two rich register ships, and prejudiced them still more by bringing off the provision of quicksilver for their mines, which the captors nobly refused to restore for the large offer of three hundred thousand

[1] He was fond of this illustration. See vol. iv. p. 159.—Cunningham.

pounds. The generous tars, too, have admitted their companions the landmen into a participation of the booty. One sailor shines brighter than all their constellation: one of the first to mount the scaling-ladder, he jumped on the platform with a sabre in each hand; but, finding there a Spaniard swordless, the Briton, with the air of a Paladin, tossed one of his weapons to him, and said, "Now we are on equal terms!"

Having no more public events to tell you, I am sorry I must leap to a private story, in which there is far from being either bravery or gallantry, but which is savage enough to have been transmitted from the barbarians on the Mosquito shore, whether Indian or Spanish; for the latter, who had previously taken a fort from us, had acted a little in the style of their original exploits in America. Well! but my story comes only 'cross the Irish Channel. Lord C., a recent peer of that kingdom, and married to a great heiress there, a very amiable woman, had, however, a more favourite mistress. The nymph, like my Lord, was no mirror of constancy, but preferred a younger, handsomer swain. The Peer, frantic with jealousy, discovered an assignation, and, hiring four bravoes, broke in upon the lovers; when, presenting a pistol to the head of his rival, he bade him make instant option of being shot, or reduced to the inability of giving any man jealousy. The poor young man was so ungallant as to prefer a chance for life on any terms. The brutal Lord ordered his four ruffians to seize the criminal, and with his own hand performed the bloody operation. The victim died the next day, the murderer escaped, but one of his accomplices is taken.

Dec. 21.

We seem to have made a little eruption back into the year 1759, for victories have arrived, for two days together. D'Estaing is defeated, and wounded in two places, at the siege of the Savannah in Georgia, and has lost fifteen hundred men; so says the Extraordinary Gazette: but I must own there seems to be a great *hiatus* in the authority; for it comes from nobody concerned in the action, not even to those that sent it to us. Indeed, there is nothing contradictory that we have not believed about D'Estaing within these forty-eight hours: he himself, with four other ships and sixteen transports, was sworn to be at the bottom of the sea, by one that saw them there, or might have seen them there, as he was close by when they set out. Then he was landed in France; and then he was repulsed in Georgia; and then his whole fleet revives, and re-assembles, and

blocks up the port of the Savannah: and now he himself is indubitably at Paris, as letters thence last night positively affirm. However, the Park and Tower guns firmly believe the Gazette's account, and huzza'd yesterday morning. I hope they were in the right, excepting on the entire existence of D'Estaing's squadron.

Well! you may hold up your head a little *vis à vis de Monsieur de Barbantan*. If new triumphs do not pour in too fast, I hope to be able to write the next myself. At present I am party per pale, gout and health; but unluckily the former is on the dexter side, and makes it void.

1877. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 23, 1779.

Alas, Madam, I am very unlikely to enjoy even a more agreeable prison at Ampthill: all my advancement is retrograde; again, I can neither walk nor write. The deluge, which your Ladyship calls mild weather, as I suppose Noah did the moment his pair of peacocks ceased croaking for more rain, has brought back my gout particularly into my right hand; and, as I had no reason to expect a return, I have still less for guessing when it will depart. Lord Bristol died yesterday morning of the same distemper in his stomach: not three months ago he made a visit to the Duke and Duchess at the Pavilions, and good-naturedly called on me on his return, to persuade me to leave off the use of the bootikins, and to recommend a system of applications, I forget what, that had done wonders for him. I rose and stamped hard with both feet on the marble, and said, "This is what the bootikins do for me: your Lordship, though now free from the gout, has been brought into my room by two servants: I will not blame your Lordship's method, but can I exchange my own for it?" However, as Lord Bristol is delivered from the gout and I am not, it may be a moot point whether Martha or Mary has chosen the better part.

Lord Coventry and Colonel Hervey are Lord Bristol's executors. He has left an estate of 800*l.* a year that he had purchased to Mrs. Nesbitt, for life, paying 300*l.* a year to his natural son by Mrs. Clarke (the Kitty Hunter[1]), till of age, and 400*l.* afterwards, he to have the whole if surviving her; if not, she and Colonel Hervey to have the property of the whole. His personal estate.

[1] See vol. iv. p. 59.—Cunningham.

estimated at 30,000*l.*, Lord Bristol divides between Mrs. Nesbitt and the aforesaid son. I do not hear of another legacy, not even to his sisters. To Colonel Hervey he had in his life given their mother's house in St. James's-place.

I know no more of our new victories than your Ladyship reads in the newspapers and gazettes; nor can one add to the ridicule which the Court itself has thrown on the business in Georgia, by firing guns, by efforts at illuminations, and by their method of retailing the intelligence by an anonymous letter, and by suppressing every syllable from General Prevost himself, &c. They had better have stuck to their triumphs on the Mosquito shore, which were heroic and perfect in every light, and the narratives of which seem to me the clearest relations of any battle or siege I ever saw.

The prospect does seem to clear up happily in Ireland. Oh that we may come a little to our senses, and be softened into some wisdom by good fortune, as we have long been hardened in folly and obstinacy, by disappointment and disgrace!

You are to know, Madam, that I have in my custody the individual ebony cabinet in which Madame de Sévigné kept her pens and paper for writing her matchless letters. It was preserved near Grignan by an old man who mended her pens, and whose descendant gave it last year to Mr. Selwyn, as truly worthy of such a sacred relic. It wears, indeed, all the outward and visible signs of such venerable preciousness, for it is clumsy, cumbersome, and shattered, and inspires no more idea of her spirit and *légèreté*, than the mouldy thigh-bone of a saint does of the unction of his sermons.

I have full powers to have it repaired and decorated as shall seem good in my own eyes, though I had rather be authorised to inclose and conceal it in a shrine of gold and jewels, as princely bigots serve the skulls and shrivelled corpses of their patron saints.

Lord Macartney is gone to Ireland; and, as many others are dispersing themselves, my circles will be very thin, though I must depend upon them for some time, for last night and this morning I have had pretty sharp pain in my hand. At the beginning of this fit, your Ladyship commended my patience; alack! it is what I am reduced to ingraft upon temperance, which did not avail me. If I live to an hundred, I suppose I shall acquire all the other virtues but the one which longevity makes a *sinecure*, and consequently requires no institution.

MISS CHUDLEIGH.

London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1851.

1878. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Christmas Day, 1779.

I SUPPOSE this will find you like a true reformer in the midst of anathemas and minced pies. I am sorry the great Barons who would not budge a foot while they had any dormant hopes of favour, are coming to put their sickle into the fruits of your plough. Mr. Fred. Montagu was so obliging as to call on me and offer to carry any letter to you; but at that time I was not able to scratch out a line, as I do now, even with a swaddled hand, and in truth with so much difficulty that I could engrave as expeditiously. I have had a relapse, though a slight one, and called it only a *codicil* to my gout: Mr. Gibbon said very well, "but I fancy it is not in consequence of your *will*." Lord Bristol[1] has outran me, and leaves an Earl-Bishop,[2] and a Countess-Duchess. Have you seen in yesterday's 'Public Advertiser' a good collection of applications to public characters from Tom Thumb, like those with which we were so pestered last year from Shakespeare. The last, on the bigamist Maid of Honour I have just mentioned, is one of the happiest quotations I ever saw:—

> A Maid like me Heaven form'd at least for *two*;
> I married him—and now I'll marry you.

I find the graving-tool too laborious, and must quit it, and as I have given my Secretary leave to go and keep his Christmas, this must be only a note, not that I had anything new to tell you if I could have continued.

Yours, &c.[3]

[1] Lady Hervey's favourite son, a Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and husband of Miss Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston. He died 23rd Dec., 1779.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] He was succeeded by his brother, the Bishop of Derry.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Dec. 28, 1779.

I AM shocked to think that when you put yourself to so much pain in writing to me, I should not be more frequent in my return of letters; but if ever any man had a good excuse, I have one at present. Look only at the inclosed list—the last that will be published; count only the names, and consider how very active a small committee must have been to have collected these in the space of a fortnight. I do not think that any measure of the kind was ever carried on to this point with greater success; but beyond this point I can frame but little conjecture. The great Barons pour in upon us to-morrow to do precisely what you say they will do. Could this have been prevented (and yet all we could do was done to prevent it), I have no doubt our conclusion would have been as prosperous as our beginning. What this

1879. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 27, 1779.

I HAVE two good reasons against writing,—nothing to say, and a lame muffled hand; and therefore I choose to write to you, for it shows remembrance. For these six weeks almost I have been a prisoner with the gout, but begin to creep about my room. How have you borne the late deluge and the present frost? How do you like an Earl-Bishop?[1] Had not we one before in ancient days? I have not a book in town; but was not there Anthony Beck, or a Hubert de Burgh, that was Bishop of Durham and Earl of Kent, or have I confounded them?

Have you seen Rudder's new 'History of Gloucestershire?' His

conclusion turns out to be, you shall hear as soon as I know it. Excuse the greatest haste, and believe how heartily I wish you a speedy recovery.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, Dec.* 31, 1779.

ALL that I can have time to tell you more than you will read here in print is, that there was a very slight opposition began by Mr. Cholmley (who married Smelt's daughter), and seconded by a school-boy declamation of Mr. Drummond's. Smelt himself (warm from the royal bosom of his gracious master) gave us a long harangue, beginning with a string of egotisms, and afterwards resigning in form his own Pension: then declaring, too, *totidem verbis*, that instead of decreasing the power of the Crown, we ought to give it a great deal more power; that the King was the soul of the State, the best patriot—nay, the only patriot in the nation; that we ought to be taxed a great deal more (for which he was hissed by the yeomanry); that all our calamities arose from the opposition, who tore off the sacred veil which always ought to envelope the sovereign; and a great deal more trash, which served the cause he meant to attack more than any other speech could have done. He was afterwards ridiculed paragraph by paragraph, by Mr. Spencer Stanhope, member for Carlisle, with great effect. Sir G. Savile being called upon by one of the Poachers, of which there were a great many, gave us an excellent speech, and though the Petition was carried nem. con., there were two faint noes by Smelt and his friend Matt Dodsworth, on which I wished to call a division, but without effect. You will find by the resolves that we are still as active as if the Petition was yet in embryo, and shall continue so till Easter Tuesday, so that it is hardly possible this Petition can be treated as others have been, especially if other counties join, of which we have the most sanguine expectations. The spirit, if not the exact letter, of Smelt's speech will, I hope, soon be published, and if anything can, it will astonish you by its impropriety. He has torn the veil with a vengeance.

Yours, in great haste,

W. MASON.

Pray show this to Lord Harcourt; I have not time to write more, and for this, you see, I have used an amanuensis to copy what I had before written to another correspondent.

[1] Hervey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry.—CUNNINGHAM.

additions to Sir Robert Atkyns make it the most sensible history of a county that we have had yet; for his descriptions of the site, soil, products, and prospects of each parish are extremely good and picturesque; and he treats fanciful prejudices, and Saxon etymologies, when unfounded, and traditions, with due contempt.

I will not spin this note any further, but shall be glad of a line to tell me you are well. I have not seen Mr. Lort since he roosted under the metropolitan wings of his Grace of Lambeth. Yours ever.

1880. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 1, 1780.

I ASSURE you, Madam, I have no affectation of philosophic indifference to life. I like to live whenever I am free from pain, or do not look forward—but I have so comfortless a prospect before me—if I have any prospect before me, that it is no counterfeit levity when I speak with coolness of a moment that may spare me many sufferings, and what I dread still more, helpless decrepitude. But you shall hear no more of thoughts that I confess ought not to pass my own bosom, and which Lord Bristol's death suggested. You are equally kind, Madam, in being affected at what I said, and in recommending Bath; but indeed I cannot listen to that advice. Bath is excellent for those who are *in travail* of the gout, and seek a fit as a composition for subsequent health, but I certainly have no occasion to accelerate the attacks. They are made without any declaration of war, and I find myself a prisoner, as happened six weeks ago, when I thought myself most secure of a truce by the short fit in September. In short, my dear lady, Bath might give me the gout, but cannot cure it. My management of myself is formed on the best observations I can make on my own constitution after long experience: I certainly have less quantity of pain, and have shorter fits than formerly: I recover the use of all my limbs tolerably in the intervals, and my spirits still more; and therefore, when I am reckoned deaf to all advice, it is not from obstinacy, but from never having known one, who, doomed to an incurable disorder, had better success; or who, though Herculean to me, preserved his inside so strong, or his head and stomach so totally unattacked. I would not have said half so much, if gratitude for your Ladyship's singular goodness had not obliged me to give you a rational account, to compensate for the idleness of what you dignify by calling it wit and phrases; though

my expressions are but the colours with which I would skin over the reflections that arise in long illnesses, and that will sometimes slip into the pen when they are floating on the mind.

I gladly congratulate your Ladyship and our Lord on the pacification of Ireland, which seems assured by the cordial reception given by both Houses there to the Quieting Bill. Their expressions are even pathetic and heroic; for instead of exulting on having extorted redress, they accept it with humility and gratitude. It now appears that that alarming struggle was fortunate: it has obtained what England ought to have conceded earlier, and what may enrich both countries; it leaves a sturdy army there, ready in the spirit of its hero of the Boyne to resist France or arbitrary power—a better guard than toleration of Papists to protect a Protestant constitution!

Methinks I am sorry, Madam, that you did not accept for me even with thanks, as I should have done myself, Lady Shelburne's condescension in apologising for not answering my card, which was totally unnecessary: mine was a mere *how-d'ye*—sure she will not think me capable of having complained! I could be as peevishly ceremonious as your great viceroy, Lord Buckingham, who I see is grown popular, with Lord Hillsborough and Lord North—the same insects do not thrive in both countries.

Lord Bristol has left a paper, or narrative of the Lord knows what, that is to be padlocked till his son is of age—nine years hence; and then not to be published while *whom God long preserve* is alive. This was leaving the boy a fortune indeed, if both live nine years! There, too, is another noble author—not for me, but for a supplement. I had rather the Earl-Bishop would publish his father's Memoirs.[1]

Last year began with a hurricane: this commences with a fog as thick as butter—I hope, an omen of our adversity softening, as mists never blow down trees nor blow away islands, and may clear up. This is a new species of divination, and may be called *the comparative;* and as every man is partial to a system he invents, however nonsensical, you will take it as a compliment, I hope, Madam, if I wish you a happy new fog, and a thousand of them!

P.S. All my letter but on this page was written last night, the improvement of my hand is owing to having exchanged my bootikin

[1] Lord Hervey's most entertaining and instructive 'Memoirs' were published in 1848, in 2 vols. 8vo., edited by John Wilson Croker. Mr. Croker was of opinion that Walpole had not been allowed to read them.—CUNNINGHAM.

for a glove—so the fog has been of service to me, and will consequently convince me of the reality of my discovery. Formerly the same prognostics foretold the downfall of the Turk and the cure of the toothache.

1881. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 3, 1780.

Well! Madam, I shall love a fog as long as I live; it is the best weatherglass in Christendom, and then I spell it so well! Nostradamus was a baby to me. Nay, I now understand that text, which I never comprehended before, *of seeing as in a glass darkly.* Here has Captain Fielding brought in the whole Dutch fleet, with the life and soul, veins, arteries, blood and nerves of the squadron at Brest, which will now be a *caput mortuum.* The Dutch made no resistance; this is all I know yet, but that their Admiral is prisoner too. Now you expect a Dutch war—no such thing—at least you are a bad courtier if you conclude so. It is supposed that the French town of Amsterdam refused to pay taxes unless they might trade with France, but that the rulers of the Republic declared they would not *protect* such illicit trade; and some whispers, not very low, say, that Sir Joseph Yorke advised this capture, persuaded that Holland would not resent it. Such is the creed of the morning: I answer for nothing but being glad of the crippling of the French navy.

Here is another fresh piece of intelligence for which I do not love my friend the fog so much, though I believe it gives as much pleasure at St. James's. The back settlers in Carolina have risen, since Prevost's victory, to the amount of three thousand, have seized a town, and declared for the old government. Whatever contributes —and a straw will—to encourage the prosecution of that ruinous war, is very unpropitious.

Oh dear! I fear my fog was but a mist! The Dutch Admiral fired a broadside, but struck on Fielding's first gun, and is brought in with all—but what we wanted—naval stores. If this last state, and not the first, is the truth (for remember, Madam, I write as anybody passes by, and only stops to tell me something; and therefore warrant nothing), the Ministers may have blundered us into another war; and then it will be they, and not I, that have seen in a glass darkly.

Well! I shall not pique myself, Madam, on adjusting the more or

less of this event, which will be discussed, contradicted, affirmed in every newspaper. My office is to despatch away my letters with nine post horns blowing before them on the first singularity. The truth or falsehood is to follow after at their leisure in the state coach, and Don Welbore Ellis may then hand them out in ceremony if he pleases. The pleasure of a letter in the country is hearing something unexpected that sets everybody to chattering, guessing, reasoning in the dark, and wanting to hear more—and that more, when it comes, is generally far short of the expectation; so you shall have no second parts from me.

My last intelligence was wrong; Lord Bristol's codicil, now printed, seems to relate entirely to his father's papers, to nothing of his own; nay, it seems rather civilly than rudely meant as to the hour of publication, and to prevent disagreeable truths appearing with regard to the late Prince of Wales.[1]

1882. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Jan. 4, 1780.

I ALWAYS perceived a striking resemblance between you and Milton:—

I thought so once, but now I know it.[2]

Why, you are an agitator, a sequestrator, and one of the committee of safety; one does not know to treat you with reverence enough. I would write to you with my hat off, if I ever put it on; and therefore could only do as my namesake-uncle did, who being met walking near the Hague, by the Spanish Ambassador on a proud Isabella Jennet, who descended to make a bow, the latter said he could not return the compliment unless Don Guzman would lend him his horse, that he might mount, dismount, and make his obeisance. Poor Mr. Smelt! how one may hurt a man by serving him! I like your committee's thanking the Barons for their appearance, which was a very civil way of marking the impertinence of their intrusion. They would have made a party-affair of what was the result of feeling for the distresses and disgrace of the nation; but, alas! here is the nation plunged deeper still. Yesterday

[1] There are disagreeable enough truths remaining in the printed 'Memoirs' respecting Frederick, Prince of Wales. Some passages, however, have been torn out from the original MS., and are now, it is to be feared, irretrievable.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Prior.—CUNNINGHAM.

came an express from Captain Fielding, who has brought a Dutch fleet into Plymouth, and yet has missed his aim, which was to seize stores going to the Brest fleet essential to its requipment. Those requisites were masts and timber, instead of which he has only captured hemp and iron. Whether the more material articles have escaped, or have not yet ventured out, I do not know; nor do I relate the particulars of the rencounter, which I have heard variously related, and which seem to have consisted of ceremonious salutations by the mouths of cannon, rather than hostile attacks.

No sooner do we breathe in Ireland than we open a new tempest with Holland. Is it possible that we should not sink in this ocean of troubles! You who are so sanguine and spirited, have you any hopes of England rising again? I who have lately passed so many solitary hours of pain and reflection see no distant ray of recovery. In vain that selfish uncomfortable question occurs, "What is it to thee, poor Skeleton, what is the future fate of thy country? The churchyard at Houghton will not be narrower than it is." Still the love of that country, of its liberty and prosperity, will be uppermost, and grief for its fall; and as there is little left for me, but to sit and think; but you are not in so despondent a mood, and you shall have no more of my meditations—I will change the theme. Some foolish friend,[1] who, by the way, cannot measure a verse, has published some paltry poems of the last Lord Lyttelton, that appear genuine, and discover no parts, which I have long believed he had not. There is a prefatory defence of his character, the badness of which the officious editor comprises in the love of women and gaming, and which were virtues compared with his other faults.

My hand has written its dose, and must repose. I have not seen Lord Harcourt these ten days, so probably shall soon, for I do not yet go abroad. Do you mean to hatch all your eggs in the North, and have you abandoned your intention of coming to town?

1883. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 4, 1780.

I AM going to write a short letter in quantity, but a very serious one in matter. A stroke has been struck that seems pregnant with another war—a war with Holland. Advice had been received of

[1] A Mr. Roberts, to whom Lord Lyttelton bequeathed by his will a few weeks before, his poems, esssays, &c.—CUNNINGHAM.

large supplies of naval stores being ready to sail for Brest, furnished by the warm friends of France, the Amsterdamers; stores essential to the re-equipment of the French navy, and as repugnant to the treaties subsisting between us and the States. These merchantmen proposed to take advantage of a convoy going to the Levant and other places, the States not countenancing that manœuvre. It was determined not to wink at such an outrage, but to hazard complaints or resentment, when such a blow could be given to the farther enterprises of our capital enemies. Captain Fielding, with five men-of-war of the line, was ordered to seize the whole contraband trade, and has executed what he could. He has brought into Plymouth eight merchantmen and three men-of-war, with their Admiral. The latter refused to allow a search; some shot were exchanged, but in air, on both sides, and then the Dutchmen struck. Fielding desired him to re-hoist his flag, but he refused, and said he must accompany his convoy; thus creating himself a prisoner.

I have related this event as vaguely—that is, as cautiously—as I could: first, because I know no particulars from authority, for it was but yesterday at noon that the notice arrived; and secondly, because I have heard various accounts; and lastly, because I have been so steeled against sudden belief by lies from all quarters for these five years, that I do not trust my eyes, ears, or reason, and still less those instruments of anybody else.

There are two uncomely features in the countenance of this business. The first is, disappointment. Though the captured stores are contraband, they consist only of hemp and iron, not of masts and timber, as we expected, and which are what the French want. Whether the magazines of those materials have escaped, or have not sailed, we—that is, I—do not know; but, when all the Ratisbons in Europe are to discuss our enterprise, it is not pleasant to have trespassed on punctilios,—if we, and not the Dutch, were the aggressors, —and not to have been crowned with success.

Thus we have involved ourselves fruitlessly in the second inconvenience, of having, perhaps, tapped a new war, without previous indemnification. You diplomatics must canvass all this; and I hope it will be left to such quiet disputants, and not be referred to redcoats and trowsers. I have given you your cue, till you receive better instructions. I am sorry to open the fortieth year of our correspondence by opening another of Janus's temples; better, however, in Holland than in Ireland, where we have got a strong friendly army instead of a rebellion.

The weakness of my hand should not serve me for an excuse, had I more to tell you. This right hand is the only limb not recovered; yet, dreading another relapse, I have not yet ventured to take the air. Perhaps age, and weariness of such frequent returns, rebate my spirit. Illness, that must be repeated, takes off the edge from the enjoyment of health; and, though I seem to have patience, it is rather a state of discomfort. No matter what, I am wearing out; yet take great care of myself, more from dread of decrepitude than from desire of life, in which I can have few joys. I have no affected indifference; for nothing, not even indifference if affected, is becoming in the decline of life. Adieu, my good friend of above forty years! Sure, Orestes and Pylades, if they were inseparable, could not pretend to compare with us, who have not set eyes on one another for nine-and-thirty years!

1884. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 5, 1780.

When you said that you feared that your particular account of your very providential escape would deter me from writing to you again, I am sure, dear Sir, that you spoke only from modesty, and not from thinking me capable of being so criminally indifferent to anything, much less under such danger as you have run, that regards so old a friend, and one to whom I owe so many obligations. I am but too apt to write letters on trifling or no occasions; and should certainly have told you the interest I take in your accident, and how happy I am that it had no consequences of any sort. It is hard that temperance itself, which you are, should be punished for a good-natured transgression of your own rules, and where the excess was only staying out beyond your usual hour. I am heartily glad you did not jump out of your chaise; it has often been a much worse precaution than any consequences from risking to remain in it; as you are lame too, might have been very fatal. Thank God! all ended so well. Mr. Masters seems to have been more frightened, with not greater reason. What an absurd man to be impatient to notify a disagreeable event to you, and in so boisterous a manner, and which he could not know was true, since it was not!

I shall take extremely kind your sending me your picture in glass. I have carefully preserved the slight outline of yourself in a gown and night-cap, which you once was so good as to give me, because

there was some likeness to your features, though it is too old even now. For a portrait of me in return, you might have it by sending the painter to the anatomical school, and bidding him draw the first skeleton he sees. I should expect any limner would laugh in my face if I offered it to him to be copied.

I thought I had confounded the ancient Count-Bishops, as I had, and you have set me right. The new temporal-ecclesiastical Peer's estate is more than twelve thousand a year, though I can scarce believe it is eighteen, as the last Lord said.

The picture found near the altar in Westminster Abbey, about three years ago, was of King Sebert. I saw it, and it was well preserved, with some others worse; but they have foolishly buried it again behind their new altar-piece; and so they have a very fine tomb of Anne of Cleves, close to the altar, which they did not know till I told them whose it was, though her arms are upon it, and though there is an exact plate of it in Sandford. They might at least have cut out the portraits and removed the tomb to a conspicuous situation; but though this age is grown so antiquarian, it has not gained a grain more of sense in that walk: witness as you instance in Mr. Grose's 'Legends,' and in the Dean and Chapter reburying the crown, robes, and sceptre of Edward I.[1] There would surely have been as much piety in preserving them in their treasury, as in consigning them again to decay. I did not know that the salvation of robes and crowns depended on receiving Christian burial. At the same time, the Chapter transgress that Prince's will, like all their antecessors; for he ordered his tomb to be opened every year or two years, and receive a new cere-cloth or pall; but they boast now of having enclosed him so substantially, that his ashes cannot be violated again.

It was the present Bishop-Dean[2] who showed me the pictures and Anne's tomb, and consulted me on the new altar-piece. I advised him to have a light octangular canopy, like the cross at Chichester, placed over the table or altar itself, which would have given dignity to it, especially if elevated by a flight of steps; and from the side arches of the octagon, I would have had a semicircle of open arches that should have advanced quite to the seats of the prebends, which would have discovered the pictures; and through the octagon itself you would have perceived the shrine of Edward the Confessor, which

[1] See vol. vi. p. 84.—Cunningham.

[2] John Thomas, Bishop of Rochester, and Dean of Westminster, died 22nd August, 1793.—Cunningham.

is much higher than the level of the choir—but men who ask advice seldom follow it, if you do not happen to light on the same ideas with themselves.

P.S. The Houghton pictures are not lost—but to Houghton and England!

1885. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 8, 1780.

Though I am always afraid of writing too often (however contradictory my practice may be), especially when I have nothing to tell you, Madam, still it is impossible not to thank you for Mr. Fitzpatrick's verses, which are written with the ease of his common conversation, and in which the rhymes seem the most proper words that could have been chosen to express his thoughts; the reverse of which is generally the case. The progress of cold and hot fits in female education are as naturally described; and your Ladyship must allow, that if morality may disapprove, truth, who is less a party woman, must give her *imprimatur* to the contents; and therefore I cannot conceive why the author should be shy of letting his poem be seen. As Macduff says,

He has no children!

I have been out to take the air, and am going to Strawberry for a day or two to season myself, before I return into a bit of the world, into which I shall step as reluctantly and timidly as a boy into cold water. I am so demolished, decayed, and so nervous, that the clapping of a door makes me quiver like a poplar. My spirits, if I did not struggle, are disposed to sympathise with my nerves; but I think while one has any sense left, one may keep one's mind under government.

I do not agree, I confess, with our Lord and his brother about Ireland. The present calm may, perhaps, not be very permanent, that is, when the people shall find that trade does not enrich in a year or two, like a voyage to the East Indies. But as it is my opinion, that, except on accidental tumults, the people never have any strong operative passions but when actuated by artful interested leaders, I think those who set the late vehemence in motion will be very cautious how they play with such two-edged tools. The leading

gentlemen of the country, I am persuaded, were overjoyed at having a pretence for being satisfied, *for* they were within a fortnight of seeing their authority slip out of their hands, and pass to those who, having no opportunity of reaching English Ministers, would have discovered treason in the estates and property of their own landed superiors. This is human nature. The great plead the distress of the people; but when they have nursed up the people to a consistency, somebody or other has shrewdness enough to discover that the great are the cause of the distress. This was on the point of happening in Ireland; but I am running into speculation, which is mighty apt to deviate into prediction, when I only meant to answer a paragraph of your Ladyship's letter.

I know nothing more of the egg of a Dutch war that we laid last week, but that Count Welderen was at the King's levee on Wednesday, which surprised me. It was vexatious to have been disappointed of making the important seizure. My first object in politics is to demolish the French marine. My Whig blood cannot bear to part with a drop of the empire of the ocean. Like the Romans, I would have Rome domineer over the world, and be free at home. The old man in me is sensible there is little equity in this, and that a good patriot is a bad citizen of the world; but a citizen of the world, as the world is constituted, would be the most useless animal in the creation, and as much *isolé* as the worthy man in the 'Spectator,' who passed his time in playing with his cat and taking a walk to Islington. To be of any use in a community one must act within a possible sphere, and the smaller the province one chooses, the more good one can do. I am persuaded that a good Justice of Peace, who confines himself to his own parish, is a more beneficial member of society than Brutus or Cato. However, there would be nothing but Tarquins and Cæsars if there was nothing but Justices of the Peace, and therefore one must not refine too much. I never did give a loose to my own disquisitions, but I found it as well to come back to my own common sense, and to the common routine of thinking.

1886. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1780.

You are very suspicious and very unjust, Madam; and I must have been the most ungrateful of men, and the most blind to my own faults, I who am so writative and talkative to those I love, if I had meant the most indirect reproof for your Ladyship's frequent and kind letters. I do not in the least guess what word you could interpret as a reproach. I know very little of what I have written, but I will swallow my Bible if I was guilty.

I return the verses as you command. I should like to have kept them, but have not even taken a copy without permission.

For three days I have been at Strawberry Hill, and was the better for it, though the weather was so sharp. I now go out, but like it so little, that I think I am not so well: my spirits do not stand mixed company; but how should I not be out of order? I have this morning been visiting a royal duke, a serene margrave, and a king's daughter. Think what a constraint upon nerves, that for two months have been seeking repose on cushions and couches, and could scarce find it there!

The print of the Sultan is not new to me; I had it four months ago. 'The Critic,' I own, was not so new as I expected; and then my being ill versed in modern dramas, most of the allusions must have escaped me. Does not half the merit of 'The Rehearsal' depend on the notes? Excuse me if I write no more, for I am fatigued; and pray do not suspect me of what I never could mean.

1887. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1780.

In consequence of my last, it is right to make you easy, and tell you that I think we shall not have a Dutch war; at least, nobody seems to expect it. What excuses we have made, I do not know; but I imagine the Hollanders are glad to gain by both sides, and glad not to be forced to quarrel with either.

What might have been expected much sooner, appears at last,—a good deal of discontent; but chiefly where it was not much expected. The country gentlemen, after encouraging the Court to war with

America, now, not very decently, are angry at the expense. As they have long seen the profusion, it would have been happy had they murmured sooner. Very serious associations are forming in many counties; and orders, under the title of petitions, coming to Parliament for correcting abuses. They talk of the waste of money; are silent on the thousands of lives that have been sacrificed—but when are human lives counted by any side?

The French, who may measure with us in folly, and have exceeded us in ridiculous boasts, have been extravagant in their reception of D'Estaing, who has shown nothing but madness and incapacity. How the northern monarchs, who have at least exhibited talents for war and politics, must despise the last campaign of England and France!

I am once more got abroad, but more pleased to be able to do so, than charmed with anything I have to do. Having outlived the glory and felicity of my country, I carry that reflection with me wherever I go. Last night, at Strawberry Hill, I took up, to divert my thoughts, a volume of letters to Swift from Bolingbroke, Bathurst, and Gay; and what was there but lamentations on the ruin of England, in that era of its prosperity and peace, from wretches who thought their own want of power a proof that their country was undone! Oh, my father! twenty years of peace, and credit, and happiness, and liberty, were punishments to rascals who weighed everything in the scales of self? It was to the honour of Pope, that, though leagued with such a crew, and though an idolater of their archfiend Bolingbroke and in awe of the malignant Swift, he never gave in to their venomous railings; railings against a man who, in twenty years, never attempted a stretch of power, did nothing but the common business of administration, and by that temperance and steady virtue, and unalterable good-humour and superior wisdom, baffled all the efforts of faction, and annihilated the falsely boasted abilities of Bolingbroke, which now appear as moderate as his character was in every light detestable. But, alas! that retrospect doubled my chagrin instead of diverting it. I soon forgot an impotent cabal of mock-patriots; but the scene they vainly sought to disturb rushed on my mind, and, like Hamlet on the sight of Yorick's skull, I recollected the prosperity of Denmark when my father ruled, and compared it with the present moment! I look about for a Sir Robert Walpole; but where is he to be found?

This is not a letter, but a codicil to my last. You will soon

probably have news enough—yet appearances are not always pregnancies. When there are more follies in a nation than principles and system, they counteract one another, and sometimes, as has just happened in Ireland, are composed *pulveris exigui jactu*. I sum up my wishes in that for peace: but we are not satisfied with persecuting America, though the mischief has recoiled on ourselves; nor France with wounding us, though with little other cause for exultation, and with signal mischief to her own trade, and with heavy loss of seamen; not to mention how her armies are shrunk to raise her marine, a sacrifice she will one day rue, when the *disciplined* hosts of Goths and Huns begin to cast an eye southward. But I seem to choose to read futurity, because I am not likely to see it: indeed I am most rational when I say to myself, What is all this to me? My thread is almost spun! almost all my business here is to bear pain with patience, and to be thankful for intervals of ease. Though Emperors and Kings may torment mankind, they will not disturb my bedchamber; and so I bid them and you good night!

P.S. I have made use of a term in this letter, which I retract, having bestowed a title on the captains and subalterns which was due only to the colonel, and not enough for his dignity. Bolingbroke was more than a rascal—he was a villain. Bathurst, I believe, was not a dishonest man, more than he was prejudiced by party against one of the honestest and best of men. Gay was a simple poor soul, intoxicated by the friendship of men of genius, and who thought *they* must be good who condescended to admire *him*. Swift was a wild-beast, who baited and worried all mankind almost, because his intolerable arrogance, vanity, pride, and ambition were disappointed; he abused Lady Suffolk, who tried and wished to raise him, only because she had not power to do so: and one is sure that a man who could deify that silly woman Queen Anne, would have been more profuse of incense to Queen Caroline, who had sense, if the court he paid to her had been crowned with success. Such were the men who wrote of virtue to one another; and even that mean exploded miser, Lord Bath, presumed to talk of virtue too!

1888. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1780.

THE letter I this moment received, Madam, is a great mark of confidence indeed, and I wish I could repay it by reasons for dispelling your uneasiness. One of your apprehensions I think not a very solid one, at least a minute one in comparison of the greater clouds that threaten; I mean your dread of abuse. I know not why, nor how it can be directed personally to one amongst so many.

That the scene grows very serious there is no doubt; nor do I assume vanity from having possessed the spirit of prophecy: a most useless talent, as predictions never serve as warnings. We know prophets are not honoured in their own country: where then should they be honoured?—where they are not known?—where, probably, they never are heard of? I believe your Ladyship has heard me say, that whenever the tide should turn, it would be terrible; and that they who had been fools would, to excuse themselves, say they had been cheated.

Still I do not presume on having judged rightly once, nor shall pretend to go on divining; though I can guess at some things that will happen, but which are not so proper for a letter; and yet you might decipher some of my home-opinions from what I said in my last on the leaders in Ireland. In general, I think there is great confusion toward; nor can I foresee what its march will be. The end of its end is but too well to be guessed, which is very rarely consonant to its intentions; and therefore, even if necessary, not to be anxiously wished.

Age and illness naturally make me more tranquil than I should be at such a moment, if younger. *Esto perpetua!* is always at my heart to say to my country and its constitution; but the hand of my climacteric clock rusts at the hour of peace, and will let me wish nothing but to hear *that* strike. As I am as unlike Oliver Cromwell as possible, I do not like to depart in a storm; nay, if anybody would listen, I would preach moderation; but the superannuated can only sit quiet and observe the progress of the hurricane, or be swept away with it!

I did not write your Ladyship an account on Saturday, as at first I had a mind to do, of Mr. [Hans] Stanley's horrid exit, as I hoped it would prove one of those common ill-natured expositions of sudden

deaths; but it was too true. He was found yet alive, and had given his throat two gashes, but was dead before the company could be fetched from the house. His will, made in July, was so reasonable, that it looks almost as if, having satisfied reason, he thought himself at liberty to indulge his frenzy; but, in fact, the delirium was almost instantaneous. At eleven he had written letters, and left an unfinished one open on his table, and then issued into the road to act his tragedy, where he was found.

He leaves his estate, about 5000*l.* a year, equally between his sisters, and to the survivor, with a jointure of 500*l.* a year to either husband, if surviving. He gives the estate at Chelsea, that came from Sir Hans Sloane, about half of the whole, to his next relation, Lord Cadogan; the residue to Mr. Sloane, with his library at present, and the choice of four pictures; and a small estate in Wales to a most distant cousin (*vide* note at the end of my 'Historic Doubts'[1]), the late Mr. Rice, who being dead before him, the bequest is disputable. His not having altered that disposition is another proof that the madness was very recent. Nay, the evening before his death, or that very morning, he had expressed to one of the company his satisfaction in the way of life at Althorp. In short, it is a most shocking story, and with his father's catastrophe, dreadful to the two sisters!

1889. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1780.

No disparagement to your political labours for saving a State that cannot be saved (for I look on the death-bed repentance of a nation as I do on that of a simple mortal), I had rather have written one line about a watch,

that tick tacks obstinately right,

than have cleansed the Augean mews. I do not mean to exhort you to do nothing but describe the movements of watches and clocks as long as you live, like the mechanic, who made the serpent in 'Orpheus and Eurydice,' and ruined himself by making nothing but serpents of all sizes till he was in the Fleet. As little do I mean to depreciate the *one line's* twin brothers and sisters. No! had it as many as the Countess of Holland's issue; but one perfect

[1] Walpole's Works, vol. ii. p. 184.—CUNNINGHAM.

line as brilliant as Pitt's diamond can efface a jeweller's whole shop; and I suppose that in Mahomet's Paradise every true believer will fling his handkerchief to one of the houries in preference to all the rest. This is my case, and next to the one line, I am delighted with the universality of your talents (excepting that one for idleness), and I admire how you can by turns play on all instruments, whether lyres, celestinettes, or country gentlemen, and make harmony out of them all. You might be organist to the Spheres, for you make Whigs and Tories, *and high cathedral-men* (a better word than *churchmen*), and Presbyterians move in concert, though as distant as Saturn and the Moon. Stay! I should have inverted the order of my planets to make the application more just; for though grim Saturn's belt and satellites strike one at first as proper accompaniments to an allusion to high cathedral-men, yet I must give the preference to the Moon as still more consonant to the character of *Mother cathedral*, which adheres to the earth as its centre, and only moves round the sun in compliment to and in company with her sovereign.

I have received all your journals with gratitude, and can distinguish where you have *smelted* and refined the materials; but I find I am in a very rhapsodical, that is, nonsensical, mood, and therefore I will try to be a little more sober, though your Aganippean water gets into my head and makes me as drunk as the royal beautifying fluid has made a poor deputy Mentor, though only outwardly applied.

I have no news for you but the shocking death of Hans Stanley, who, in a sudden fit of frenzy, went out of the house at Althorp last Thursday, and cut his throat in the public road, as his father did in bed with his wife.

There is a Dutch sçavant come over, who is author of several pieces so learned that I do not know even their titles; but he has made a discovery in my way which you may be sure I believe, for it *proves* what I had suspected, and hinted in my 'Anecdotes of Painting,' that the use of oil colours was known long before Van Eyck. Mr. Raspe, the discoverer,[1] has found a MS. of one Theophilus, a German monk in the eleventh century, who gives receipts for preparing the colours. There are copies of this work written in infernal Latin, in the libraries at Wolfenbuttel and Leipsic, in the King of France's, and two at Cambridge, which Raspe has tran-

[1] Rodolph Raspe, author of a 'Critical History of Oil Painting.'—CUNNINGHAM.

scribed. He has found, too, a like treatise of one Heraclius. They are very much in the manner of Salmon's works. Raspe writes in English, much above ill, and speaks it as readily as French; and he proves that Vasari, on bad or no information, was the first who ascribed the invention of oil painting to Van Eyck an hundred years after his death. Raspe is poor, and I shall try to get subscriptions to enable him to print his work, which is sensible, clear, and unpretending.

Pray read a little book[1] no bigger than a silver penny, called a Christmas-box, for *me*—yes, for *me*. It is a story that is no story, or scarce one; it is a sort of imitation of Voltaire, and yet perfectly original. There is nature, character, simplicity, and carelessness throughout; observation without pretensions, and, I believe, a good deal of truth in some of the incidents, that I take to have happened. My vanity may have interested me too much, though I see it as a thing not likely to please; but if you read it *twice*, which its brevity will easily allow, I think you will see real merit in it, especially when you know the author is young.

1890. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Jan. 22, 1780.

I LIKE much your Essay on the Celestinette, which I have this minute received. Proceed, and say all that timid critics would be afraid to say. Show all the blunders and faults of the old masters, and prove that there can be no music, but by exploding prejudices, and by restoring ancient harmony.

I cannot write more now, for one of my fingers, which has long been a quarry of chalkstones, and has been and is terribly inflamed with this last fit, has burst, and is so sore that I can scarce hold the pen. I muster all the resolution and spirits I can, but the latter often sink with the prospect I have before me of increasing pain and infirmity. To talk of prospect is seeming to reckon on old age as a permanency; but in the light I see it with its probable concomitants, be assured I do not brood with luxury over that chance!

Kirgate I cannot employ, for he is gone to Strawberry to print some verses of Mr. Miller;—*oui, véritablement*, of Mr. Charles Miller, and very pretty they are. I shall send them to you, though not as an adequate recompense.

[1] The Miniature Picture by Lady Craven.—CUNNINGHAM.

1891. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 25, 1780.

It was but yesterday, Sir, that I received the favour of your letter, and this morning I sent, according to your permission, to Mr. Sheridan the elder to desire the manuscript of your tragedy;[1] for as I am but just recovering of a fit of the gout, which I had severely for above two months, I was not able to bear the fatigue of company at home; nor could I have had the pleasure of attending to the piece so much as I wished to do, if I had invited ladies to hear it, to whom I must have been doing the honours.

I have read your play once, Sir, rapidly, though alone, and therefore cannot yet be very particular on the details; but I can say already, with great truth, that you have made a great deal more than I thought possible out of the skeleton of a story; and have arranged it so artfully, that unless I am deceived by being too familiar with it, it will be very intelligible to the audience, even if they have not read the original fable; and you have had the address to make it coherent, without the marvellous, though so much depended on that part. In short, you have put my extravagant materials in an alembic, and drawn off only what was rational.

Your diction is very beautiful, often poetic, and yet what I admire, very simple and natural; and when necessary, rapid, concise, and sublime.

If I did not distrust my own self-love, I should say that I think it must be a very interesting piece: and yet I might say so without vanity, so much of the disposition of the scenes is your own. I do not yet know, Sir, what alterations you propose to make; nor do I perceive where the second and fourth acts want amendment. The first in your manuscript is imperfect. If I wished for any correction, it would be to shorten the scene in the fourth act between the Countess, Adelaide, and Austin, which rather delays the impatience of the audience for the catastrophe, and does not contribute to it, but by the mother's orders to the daughter at the end of the scene to repair to the great church. In the last scene I should wish to have Theodore fall into a transport of rage and despair, immediately

[1] 'The Count of Narbonne,' founded on Walpole's 'Castle of Otranto.'—Cunningham.

on the death of Adelaide, and be carried off by Austin's orders; for I doubt the interval is too long for him to faint after Narbonne's speech. The fainting fit, I think, might be better applied to the Countess; it does not seem requisite that she should die, but the audience might be left in suspense about her.

My last observations will be very trifling indeed, Sir; but I think you use noble*ness*, nice*ness*, &c. too often, which I doubt are not classic terminations for *nobility*, *nicety*, &c., though I allow that nobility will not always express nobleness. My *children's timeless deaths* can scarce be said for *untimely;* nor should I choose to employ *children's* as a plural genitive case, which I think the *s* at the end cannot imply. "Hearted preference" is very bold for preference taken to heart. Raymond in the last scene says—

> Show me thy wound—oh, hell! 'tis through her heart!

This line is quite unnecessary, and infers an obedience in displaying her wound which would be shocking; besides, as there is often a buffoon in an audience at a new tragedy, it might be received dangerously. The word "Jehovah" will certainly not be suffered on the stage.

In casting the parts I conclude Mrs. Yates, as women never cease to like acting young parts, would prefer that of Adelaide, though the Countess is more suitable to her age; and it is foolish to see her representing the daughter of women fifteen or twenty years younger. As my bad health seldom allows my going to the theatre, I never saw Mr. Henderson but once. His person and style should recommend him to the parts of Raymond or Austin. Smith, I suppose, would expect to be Theodore; but Lewis is younger, handsomer, and I think a better actor; but you are in the right, Sir, in having no favourable idea of our stage at present.

I am sorry, Sir, that neither my talents nor health allow me to offer to supply you with Prologue and Epilogue. Poetry never was my natural turn; and what little propensity I had to it, is totally extinguished by age and pain. It is honour enough to me to have furnished the canons of your tragedy; I should disgrace it by attempting to supply adventitious ornaments. The clumsiness of the seams would betray my gouty fingers.

I shall take the liberty of reading your play once more before I return it. It will be extraordinary indeed if it is not accepted, but I cannot doubt but it will be, and very successful; though it will be

great pity but you should have some zealous friend to attend to it, and who is able to bustle and see justice done to it by the managers. I lament that such a superannuated being as myself is not only totally incapable of that office, but that I am utterly unacquainted with the managers, and now too retired to form new connections. I was still more concerned, Sir, to hear of your unhappy accident, though the bad consequences are past.

1892. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 27, 1780.

I HAVE returned your tragedy, Sir, to Mr. Sheridan, after having read it again, and without wishing any more alterations than the few I hinted before. There may be some few incorrectnesses, but none of much consequence.

I must again applaud your art and judgment, Sir, in having made so rational a play out of my wild tale; and where you have changed the arrangement of the incidents, you have applied them to great advantage. The characters of the mother and daughter you have rendered more natural by giving jealousy to the mother, and more passion to the daughter. In short, you have both honoured and improved my outlines: my vanity is content, and truth enjoins me to do justice. Bishop Warburton, in his additional notes to Pope's Works, which I saw in print in his bookseller's hands, though they have not yet been published, observed that the plan of 'The Castle of Otranto' was regularly a drama[1]: an intention I am sure I do not pretend to have conceived; nor, indeed, can I venture to affirm that I had any intention at all but to amuse myself—no, not even a plan, till some pages were written. You, Sir, have realised his idea, and yet I believe the Bishop would be surprised to see how well you have succeeded. One cannot be quite ashamed of one's follies, if genius condescends to adopt, and put them to a sensible use. Miss Aikin flattered me even by stooping to tread in my eccentric steps.

[1] "We have been lately entertained with what I will venture to call, a masterpiece in the Fable; and of a new species likewise. The piece I mean is 'The Castle of Otranto.' The scene is laid in Gothic chivalry; where a beautiful imagination, supported by strength of judgment, has enabled the author to go beyond his subject, and effect the full purpose of the ancient tragedy; that is, to purge the passions by pity and terror, in colouring as great and harmonious as in any of the best dramatic writers." *Warburton.* (*Note to Pope's 'Imit. of Horace,'* Book 2, Ep. 1, v. 146. Compare vol. i. p. lxxii.—CUNNINGHAM.

Her 'Fragment,'[1] though but a specimen, showed her talent for imprinting terror. I cannot compliment the author of the 'Old English Baron,' professedly written in imitation, but as a corrective of 'The Castle of Otranto.' It was totally void of imagination and interest; had scarce any incidents; and, though it condemned the marvellous, admitted a ghost. I suppose the author thought a tame ghost might come within the laws of probability. You alone, Sir, have kept within nature, and made superstition supply the place of phenomenon, yet acting as the agent of divine justice—a beautiful use of bigotry.

I was mistaken in thinking the end of the first act deficient. The leaves stuck together, and, there intervening two or three blank pages between the first and second acts, I examined no farther, but concluded the former imperfect, which on the second reading I found it was not.

I imagine, Sir, that the theatres of Dublin cannot have fewer good performers than those of London; may I ask why you prefer ours? Your own directions and instructions would be of great advantage to your play; especially if you suspect antitragic prejudices in the managers. You, too, would be the best judge at the rehearsal of what might be improvements. Managers will take liberties, and often curtail necessary speeches, so as to produce nonsense. Methinks it is unkind to send a child, of which you have so much reason to be proud, to a Foundling Hospital.

1893. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 29, 1780.

The weather-cock Marquis has taken his part, or rather his leave, and resigned his key on Thursday. But there was a more extraordinary phenomenon in the closet the same day. Lord George Gordon asked an audience, was admitted, and incontinently began reading his Irish pamphlet, and the King had the patience to hear him do so for above an hour, till it was so dark that the lecturer could not see. His Majesty then desired to be excused, and said he would finish the piece himself. "Well!" said the lunatic apostle, "but you must give me your honour that you will read it out." The King promised, but was forced to pledge his honour. It puts

[1] Compare Letter to Mason, 8th April, 1778.—Cunningham.

one in mind of Charles II. at Scoon, before his Restoration. It is to be hoped this man is so mad, that it will soon come to perfection, unless my plan is adopted, of shutting up in Bedlam the few persons in this country that remain in their senses. It would be easier and much cheaper than to confine all the delirious.

Your Ladyship asked me in your last, whether it was the situation of public affairs that affected my nerves: to be sure there would be more Roman dignity in answering, Yes; but something less than truth. I fear one's country is never so near one's heart that the clapping of a door gives it a palpitation. My total weakness and variety of pains, and the trepidation that the least surprise causes on my nerves, make me so occupied with self, that I doubt the case of poor crazy old England does not affect me so entirely as it ought; and as she, however crippled, will hobble on somehow or other; and as my option lies only between suffering and extinction, the surviving world is but a secondary consideration. Nay, I am often divided between contrary shames; sometimes I blush at attending more to myself than to my *patria;* and sometimes, at being anxious about a scene in which I can take so little part, and which I must quit so soon! This incertitude is very natural—but as I have no time for affectation, I let myself go according as the several sensations rise uppermost; and the Whig or the superannuated invalid predominates, as the weather-glass of my health mounts or sinks.

I enclose a copy of verses, which I have just printed at Strawberry, only a few copies, and which I hope you will think pretty. They were written three months ago by Mr. Charles Miller, brother of Sir John, on seeing Lady Horatia at Nuneham. The poor girl is better. Sir Richard Jebb pronounced her in a consumption; but he is such a raven that I did not believe him, nor do. The moment she came to town, the Duchess of Ancaster carried her for two days to Lady Elizabeth Burrell's; and as she returned better, and not worse, as I expected, from such a scene, I am little alarmed for her.

When may one expect to see you in town, Madam? or are you learning to skate *à la royale? A propos*, I was diverted with your Ladyship's calling my princes and princesses *my royal society*. It was as little in my calculation or plan to pass the end of my days with highnesses as with philosophers. *Encore à propos*, Princess Amelie told us an excellent story t'other night of Lady Mary Coke. Her Royal Highness dines once a week at Lady Holdernesse's, with only the party for the evening loo. Lady Mary asked the same

honour. The Princess insisted on a very small dinner, as she has on those occasions; but found a banquet. As she sat down, the Groom of the Chambers presented to her, as she thought, an empty gilt salver—for what purpose she could not guess; but on it lay (what she had not seen, being so purblind,) two gold pins to pin her napkin, as is her way. Still she did not perceive they were of gold; and after dinner flung them away; when, to the eternal disgrace of magnificence, Lady Mary retired to hunt for her pins.

I forgot to ask you, Madam, if you are not glad that Lord George Gordon is a Scot? Would one deny them the benefit of the Union, and monopolise lunacy ourselves? I was once talking to Crawfurd on our frenzy, and he replied, "We are not mad."—"No," said I, "but you know we are, and profit of it."

1894. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Jan. 29, 1780.

HERE are Mr. Miller's verses: his poetry, it seems, was no secret to you. It is easy, and he has an ear.

Your tenant's late husband has resigned. Have you much joy in such a convert?

Hans Stanley has left various works: one is a defence of our seizing the French ships previous to the last war. It is a dialogue in imitation of Tully's philosophic works, and is written in *Latin* too. Do you wonder he cut his throat? I formerly was obliged to read a poem of his in three cantos at Lady Hervey's, and what was fifty times worse, *before him*. It was the 'Ninth Statue' from the 'Arabian Nights,' and in imitation of 'Dryden's Fables.' Whether good or bad you may imagine, I cannot tell; I was to stop and admire, and very likely did—at the worst lines in it. Awkward he was, and brayed, but I never knew why he could not read his own work. He was now translating Pindar, and had fetched Dr. Potter to town to supervise it.

Lord George Gordon has had an audience of the King, and read an Irish pamphlet to him for above an hour, till it was pitch dark, and then exacted a promise on honour that his Majesty would finish it: he did, and then went to skate. It is impossible to wind up a letter higher.

1895. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, St. Charles's Day, Jan. 1780.

I WROTE to you last night, and must write to you again, though I do not know whether you have leisure or inclination to attend to the idle occupations with which I am forced to amuse myself, as I seldom now stir out of my own house.

This morning, turning over the second volume of the new 'Biographia,' I found the following precious sentence in the last additional note to the life of Dr. Bentley, communicated by the ingenious Mr. Cumberland, who, giving an account, too, of his uncle, Mr. Bentley's writings, *because* the latter has the honour of being related to *him*, says, speaking of Philodamus, "it was esteemed by the late eminent poet, Mr. Gray, to be one of the most capital poems in the English language. *Accordingly*, Mr. Gray wrote a laboured and elegant commentary upon it, which abounds with wit, and is one of his best productions." I say nothing of the excellent application of the word *accordingly*, nor of the false English in the last *which*, which should refer to it, and not as he means it should, to *commentary*, nor to the pedantic and Bentleian epithets of *laboured and elegant*, terms far below anything of Gray's writing, and only worthy of prefaces written by witlings who are jealous of, and yet compliment, one another; but *laboured* I dare to swear it was not, and for the wit of it, though probably true, Cumberland, of all men living, is the worst judge, who told me it was pity Gray's letters were printed as they disgraced him. I should be glad to see what this jackadandy calls a commentary, and which I suppose was a familiar letter, and perhaps a short one; for Gray could express in ten lines, what the fry of scholiasts would make twenty times as long as the text.

Mr. Cumberland, full as ingenuous as he is ingenious, has barely mentioned the edition of his grandfather's 'Lucan,' which, with singular veracity, he says that he, Mr. Cumberland, published. The truth of which veracity is exactly this: the MS. of the notes, I believe, was in Cumberland's possession, who gave it to his uncle for the latter's benefit, and for the latter's benefit I printed it at Strawberry Hill, entirely at my own expense, found the paper, and as it was at least a year printing, and I had but one printer at a guinea a week, it cost me above fifty guineas. Mr. Bentley alone selected

and revised the notes, and he and I revised the proof-sheets; and as Mr. Bentley did not choose, for reasons best known to himself or to his nephew, to appear the editor, Cumberland's name was affixed to the dedication, which, with the gift of the MS., entitled him, I suppose, to the right of calling it *his* publication—an honour, however, which I shall not contest with him. I am no more jealous of such jackdaw's feathers, than I was flattered by them, when Bishop Pearce complimented me on publishing '*Learned Authors*,' for so he thought Lucan, because he wrote in what is foolishly called *one of the learned languages:* called so at first, no doubt, by one of those dunces who call themselves *learned men.* Did I ever tell you a ridiculous blunder that happened to our edition by Mr. Bentley's and my carelessness. He had chosen for the motto a note out of the MS., in which were these words, *Multa sunt condonanda in opere postumo,* so they stand in the title-page, but, alas! Mr. Bentley had rejected the note,[1] and thus the motto quotes a note not to be found in the edition. He did not recollect he had done so, and I never searched for the note till after the edition was published.

Well: I am but expunged out of the list of printers: you are to be dethroned as an author. Mr. Cumberland has written a *laboured* and *elegant drama,* which by the title I concluded was to be very comical, and more likely to endanger the celebrity of Aristophanes than of any living wight. It is called '*The Widow of Delphi, or the Descent of the Deities,*' and I am told is to demolish the reputation of 'Caractacus.' A *précis* of the subject was published two days ago in the 'Public Advertiser' for the benefit of the *illiterati,* who are informed that poor Shakespeare was mistaken in calling the spot of the scene *Delphos* instead of *Delphi.* I hope there will be a dance of Cyclopses (I don't know whether commentators will allow that termination) hammering, by the order of Venus, armour to keep the author invulnerable, who has hitherto been terribly bruised in all his combats with mortals. He is as sore as a tetter, yet always blundering into new scrapes.

I have heard of something you received and suppressed, and I adore your temper, prudence and virtue. For God's sake be always as

[1] The note that was omitted, was on Line 641, Lib. iv.

"Non expectatis Antæus viribus hostis."

The most important note in this book by Bentley is on Lib. i. v. 231, which contains and explains his famous metrical canon on the pause at the end of the fifth foot of the verse: "In versu heroico raro admodum fit distinctio plenior pausa, vel clausula, in pede quinto," &c., which though generally, is not universally true.—MITFORD.

firm; let us have nothing that squints that way. I doubt whether it ever ought to be the *ratio ultima* of any cause. I am sure it ought never to be the first ratio of the best cause; and it is certain that only the worst has generally been the better in the end for that *ultima ratio*. Adieu!

1896. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Feb. 2, 1780.

I CANNOT tell your Ladyship precisely the story of the Duke of Ancaster's presentiment, for I have forgotten it, having heard it but once imperfectly, and being not apt to listen attentively to dreams and auguries: all I remember was, that once walking with her, he said something of foreseeing he should not live long.

I send your Ladyship, as you order, Lady Craven's Novel, which is, being very short, full of one long name, but not of long names. It is scarce a story, and I am told, is a translation; but it is very prettily told, and has, I will swear, several original expressions, that are characteristic, and must be her own. There is no mystery or secret about it, except that it was one to me for four-and-twenty hours, being sent to me anonymously, and I was all that time before I guessed the author. The reason of my not naming it, Madam, you will find in my character, which abhors anything that looks like vanity. Though I am very proud of it, do I ever boast of your goodness to me? It is certainly very glorious—

> To have contending Queens at dead of night
> Forsake their down—

and write for me or to me; but honours to me are never unaccompanied by retrospect to myself, where I behold nothing but a wretched skeleton, conscious of a thousand faults and defects, ill-skinned over with one or two studied and negative virtues, and at my best time possessed of only mediocre and common-place talents —which being a true picture, you will be so good, Madam, as not imagine that I wish to have it retouched, and therefore do not send it me back varnished, I beseech you.

I must certainly agree with you, Madam, about the two mad Lords you mention, for you know I have long thought the whole nation out of its senses. I go farther now, for I am of opinion that, like some animals, who by instinct medicine themselves, we are

going to apply that remedy of insanity, letting ourselves blood. Had the petitions been the tide of an universal torrent, they might have done what good they pleased; but I fear, with you, that that is not the case. Lord Cholmondeley told me that in Cheshire not one of the Whig gentlemen would sign the petition. In Norfolk, the county I know the best, there is scarce a name, except Mr. Coke's, of any of the great Whig or Tory families to the first signature. Nor can I believe, when three parts in four of England were with the Court, that even half have changed their opinions in one year, giddy as multitudes are. The Court has been thunderstruck with what has been already done; but will recover its spirits, and have a firm back game, for I do not find that one Scotch county has petitioned. If the petitioning committees receive no satisfaction, they will grow outrageous—and then—but I do not care to be a prophet. I like petitions; it is a Whig measure. I wished for, and recommended them five years ago, when they might have checked at least infinite mischief, and prevented the waste of buckets of blood and treasure; but some heads of opposition were still too much in hopes of passing into the closet without breaking open the door! though Yorkshire could have been led to petition then as easily as now. Well! we must still hope the best. Principles are, or ought to be, permanent things; and if they are right, must not be influenced by temporary events. We must only take care not to mistake passions for principles, nor let the latter be the aggressors, especially when the path leads to blood. I dread the spilling of blood for itself. I dread drawing it, because, though the person may suffer, the Crown, nine times in ten, is the gainer; and I dread it more particularly now, because my Whiggism was taught to consider France as our capital enemy, and she will be most advantaged by our domestic feuds. The Court deserves everything that a ruined and dishonoured nation can inflict, and has left itself without excuse. Who could plead for it, when its own accomplices and tools fly from it?—But I do hope our friends will remember that we have enemies at sea as well as at land, and that the Temple will not be taken by the Romans, while we are pulling down the Pharisees.

P.S.—I write thus freely, because my letter goes by the coach with Lady Craven's book. It should not whisper my fears to the lowest courtier in the Post Office, because it is better the Court should be alarmed and bend. Its *roideur* would produce all I apprehend.

1897. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 5, 1780.

I HAVE been turning over the new second volume of the 'Biographia,' and find the additions very poor and lean performances. The lives entirely new are partial and flattering, being contributions of the friends of those whose lives are recorded. This publication made at a time when I have lived to see several of my contemporaries deposited in this national Temple of Fame has made me smile, and reflect that many preceding authors, who have been installed there with much respect, may have been as trifling personages as those we have known and now behold consecrated to memory. Three or four have struck me particularly, as Dr. Birch, who was a worthy, good-natured soul, full of industry and activity, and running about like a young setting-dog in quest of anything, new or old, and with no parts, taste, or judgment. Then there is Dr. Blackwell,[1] the most impertinent literary coxcomb upon earth—but the editor has been so just as to insert a very merited satire on his 'Court of Augustus.'

The third is Dr. Brown, that mountebank, who for a little time made as much noise by his 'Estimate,' as ever quack did by a nostrum. I do not know if I ever told you how much I was struck the only time I ever saw him. You know one object, and the anathemas, of his 'Estimate' was the Italian Opera; yet did I find him one evening, in Passion Week, accompanying some of the Italian singers, at a concert at Lady Carlisle's. A clergyman, no doubt, is not obliged to be on his knees the whole week before Easter, and music and a concert are harmless amusements; but when Cato or Calvin are out of character, reformation becomes ridiculous—but poor Dr. Brown was mad,[2] and therefore might be in earnest, whether he played the fool or the reformer.

You recollect, perhaps, the threat of Dr. Kippis to me, which is to be executed on my father, for my calling the first edition of the 'Biographia' the 'Vindicatio Britannica'[3]—but observe how truth

[1] Dr. Thomas Blackwell, principal of the Marischal College in Aberdeen. Besides the above work, he wrote 'An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer,' and 'Letters concerning Mythology.' He died in 1757.—WRIGHT.

[2] In September, 1766, he destroyed himself in a fit of insanity.—WRIGHT.

[3] 'Vindicatio Britannica, or, a Defence of Everybody.' The expression occurs in

emerges at last! In his new volume he confesses that the article of Lord Arlington, which I had specified as one of the most censurable, is the one most deserving that censure, and that the character of Lord Arlington is "palliated beyond all truth and reason"—words stronger than mine—yet mine deserved to draw vengeance on my father! so a Presbyterian divine inverts divine judgment, and visits the sins of the children on the parents!

Cardinal Beaton's character, softened in the first edition, gentle Dr. Kippis pronounces "extremely detestable"—yet was I to blame for hinting such defects in that work!—and yet my words are quoted to show that Lord Orrery's poetry was ridiculously bad. In like manner, Mr. Cumberland, who assumes the whole honour of publishing his grandfather's 'Lucan,' and does not deign to mention its being published at Strawberry Hill (though by the way I believe it will be oftener purchased for having been printed there, than for wearing Mr. Cumberland's name to the dedication), and yet he quotes me for having praised his ancestor in one of my publications. These little instances of pride and spleen divert me, and then make me reflect sadly on human weaknesses. I am very apt myself to like what flatters my opinions or passions, and to reject scornfully what thwarts them, even in the same persons. The more one lives, the more one discovers one's ugliness in the features of others! Adieu! dear Sir: I hope you do not suffer by this severe season.

P.S. I remember two other instances, where my impartiality, or at least my sincerity, have exposed me to double censure. You perhaps condemn my severity on Charles the First; yet the late Mr. Hollis wrote against me in the newspapers, for condemning the republicans for their destruction of ancient monuments. Some blamed me for undervaluing the Flemish and Dutch pictures in my preface to the 'Ædes Walpolianæ.' Barry the painter, because I laughed at his extravagances, says, in his rejection of that school, "But I leave them to be admired by the Hon. Horace Walpole, and such judges."[1] Would not one think I had been their champion!

his 'Account of the Earl of Anglesey,' in his 'Royal and Noble Authors.'—"It will behove us," says Kippis, "when we come to 'The Life of Sir Robert Walpole,' to take care that we be not too milky."—CUNNINGHAM.

[1] See vol. vi. p. 187.—CUNNINGHAM.

1898. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Feb. 6, 1780.

I WRITE only when I have facts to send. Detached scenes there have been in different provinces: they will be collected soon into a drama in St. Stephen's Chapel. One or two and twenty counties, and two or three towns, have voted petitions. But in Northamptonshire Lord Spencer was disappointed, and a very moderate petition was ordered. The same happened at Carlisle. At first, the Court was struck dumb, but have begun to rally. Counter-protests have been signed in Hertford and Huntingdon shires, in Surrey and Sussex. Last Wednesday a meeting was summoned in Westminster Hall: Charles Fox harangued the people finely and warmly; and not only a petition was voted, but he was proposed for candidate for that city at the next general election, and was accepted joyfully. Wilkes was his zealous advocate: how few years since a public breakfast was given at Holland House to support Colonel Luttrell against Wilkes! Charles Fox and his brother rode thence at the head of their friends to Brentford. Ovid's Metamorphoses contains not stranger transformations than party can work.

I must introduce a new actor to you, a Lord George Gordon,—metamorphosed a little too, for his family were Jacobites and Roman Catholics: he is the Lilburne of the Scottish Presbyterians, and an apostle against the Papists. He dresses, that is, wears long lank hair about his shoulders, like the first Methodists; though I take the modern ones to be no Anti-Catholics. This mad lord, for so all his family have been too, and are, has likewise assumed the patronage of Ireland. Last Thursday he asked an audience of the King, and, the moment he was admitted into the closet, began reading an Irish pamphlet, and continued for an hour, till it was so dark he could not see; and then left the pamphlet, exacting a promise on royal honour that his Majesty would finish it. Were I on the throne, I would make Dr. Monro[1] a Groom of my Bedchamber: indeed it has been necessary for some time; for, of the King's lords, Lord Bolingbroke is in a mad-house, and Lord Pomfret and my nephew ought to be there. The last, being fond of onions, has lately distributed bushels of that root to his Militia; Mr. Windham[2] will not be surprised.

[1] Physician of Bedlam.—WALPOLE.

[2] Mr. Windham had been Lieutenant-Colonel [Major] of the Norfolk Militia under Lord Orford, and had resigned on the trouble he gave them.—WALPOLE.

By the tenor of the petitions you would think we were starving; yet there is a little coin stirring. Within this week there has been a cast at hazard at the Cocoa tree, the difference of which amounted to an hundred and four-score thousand pounds. Mr. O'Birne, an Irish gamester, had won one hundred thousand pounds of a young Mr. Harvey of Chigwell, just started from a midshipman[1] into an estate by his elder brother's death. O'Birne said, "You can never pay me." "I can," said the youth; "my estate will sell for the debt." "No," said O.; "I will win ten thousand—you shall throw for the odd ninety." They did, and Harvey won.

However, as it is a little necessary to cast about for resources, it is just got abroad, that about a year ago we took possession of a trifling district in India called the Province of Oude, which contains four millions of inhabitants, produces between three and four millions of revenue, and has an army of 30,000 men: it was scarce thought of consequence enough to deserve an article in the newspapers. If you are so *old-style* as to ask how we came to take possession, I answer, by the new law of nations; by the law by which Poland was divided. You will find it in the future editions of Grotius, tit. "Si une terre est à la bienséance d'un grand Prince." Oude appertained by that very law to the late Sujah Dowla. His successors were weak men, which *in India* is incapacity. Their Majesties the East-India Company, whom God long preserve, have *succeeded.*

This petty event has ascertained the existence of a certain being, who, till now, has not been much more than a matter of faith,—the Grand Lama. There are some affairs of trade between the sovereigns of Oude and his Holiness the Lama. Do not imagine the East-India Company have leisure to trouble their heads about religion. Their commanding officer corresponded with the Tartar Pope, who, it seems, is a very sensible man. The Attorney-General asked this officer, who is come over, how the Lama wrote. "Oh," said he, "like any person." "Could I see his letters?" said Mr. Wedderburne. "Upon my word," said the officer, "when the business was settled, I threw them into the fire." However, I hear that somebody, not quite so mercantile, has published one of the Lama's letters in the 'Philosophical Transactions.' Well! when we break in Europe, we may pack up and remove to India, and be emperors again!

[1] Afterwards Admiral Sir Eliab Harvey, Knt., G.C.B., and distinguished as one of the heroes of Trafalgar. He sat in the House of Commons for the town of Malden from 1780 to 1784, and for the county of Essex from 1802 to his death in 1830.—WRIGHT

Do you believe me, my good Sir, when I tell you all these strange tales? Do you think me distracted, or that your country is so? Does not this letter seem an olio composed of ingredients picked out of the history of Charles I., of Clodius and Sesostris, and the Arabian Nights? Yet I could have coloured it higher without trespassing on truth; but when I, inured to the climate of my own country, can scarcely believe what I hear and see, how should you, who converse only with the ordinary race of men and women, give credit to what I have ventured to relate, merely because in forty years I have constantly endeavoured to tell you nothing but truth? Moreover, I commonly reserve passages that are not of public notoriety, not having the smallest inclination to put the credulity of foreign post-offices to the test. I would have them think that we are only mad with valour, and that Lord Chatham's cloak has been divided into shreds no bigger than a silver penny amongst our soldiers and sailors. Adieu!

1899. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 12, 1780.

I OBEY, Madam, as far as writing, to show my obedience; but I certainly cannot amuse you. Politics I disclaim, when Lord Ossory is in town; he sits at the fountain head, and I can get no purer a draught, than what is adulterated by Betty[1] or Macpherson for their different customers. Yet when nothing is stirring but politics, what can I send? Oh! old Egerton is dead, and has left the Duke of Bridgewater but one thousand pounds of all his millions. They go to a sister and her children, and then to a Miss Sykes; and if she does not become a Duchess, then to the above said Duke. Another legacy of 5000*l.* is given to Mrs. Grey, by her husband's sister Lady Di. Middleton.

Everybody is full of Mr. Burke's yesterday's speech, which I only mention as parent of a *mot* of George Selwyn. Lord George Gordon, single, divided the house, and Selwyn set him down afterwards at White's, where he said, "I have brought the whole Opposition in my coach; and I hope one coach will always hold them, if they mean to take away the Board of Works."[2]

Lord Ossory assures me your Ladyship will be here next week; it

[1] See Vol. ii., p. 213.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Of which Selwyn was paymaster— CUNNINGHAM.

will be a red-lettered day in my almanac, from which the gout has expunged most of the festivals. Another shall be *Innocents' Day*, for the Ladies Anne and Gertrude—and I believe my devotions at my chapel of ease, in Grosvenor Place, will be as sincere, mind, I do not say fervent, as Lady M. Fitzgerald's at the Lock Hospital, in the neighbourhood.

1900. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 22, 1780.

I HAVE been waiting impatiently for a confirmation of Sir George Rodney's victory over the Spaniards, that I might send it to you as dose for Monsieur de Barbantan; but either the Admiral's messenger-sloop has been taken, or he is still pursuing the flying enemy, or gone to the West Indies. However, as both Spain and France allow that Sir George had the advantage, there is no dispute but on the more or fewer of his prizes. Well! but novel as triumphs have been of late, this naval one, and everything else, is drowned in the present great domestic moment. I must prepare you for a new æra —so new, and of such late birth, that I cannot pretend to tell you of what it will be the æra.

I have mentioned our provincial committees, petitions, and associations. They have spread into nearly half the *English* counties, and have acquired additional weight by the approach of a general election; which, in times at all difficult, always puts members and candidates upon their good behaviour. Spirit begets spirit, as lethargy is catching from lethargy. Last week Lord North was beaten at the India House on his bargain with the Company, one of the promised resources. Yesterday was much more fatal to him. Sir George Savile, to humour the committee of Yorkshire, demanded last week a list of the King's pensions. The Speaker was suddenly taken ill, and the House adjourned till yesterday. The Court, in the interval, took the resolution of resisting the demand, and a pitched battle was fought with reciprocal animosity. At one in the morning Lord North carried a softening of the question, not a rejection, but by *two* voices; which in Parliamentary language or calculation (for in such times the calculators always desert a sinking vessel) is a defeat. The Tories, fearing their popularity in the country, had kept away. Some may return if the Crown is pressed; but it will lose as many among the *lookers-out*, who were with it.

yesterday, as it can recall. In short, I think the Ministers must fall, and would increase their own danger every hour if they stayed. The committees in the country will be animated by this specimen of their importance. The Opposition will be invigorated by hope, and other counties will be hurried by and into the torrent. In truth, it is to be hoped that the die *is* cast. A change of men and measures may prevent that most dreadful of evils, a civil war; and the longer the Court attempts to stem the current, the more destructive will the deluge be. It is to be wished, too, that the tide, which has turned rapidly, may be as swift in its effects; or we shall be occupied by storms at home, and not attend to our wars without.

This is a brief picture or sketch which time must finish. I might expatiate, or form conjectures; but you see that I cannot tell you more than I have of what may be fact. I could make reflections backward, but those you do not want; and it is their part to make them who drew themselves into such a desperate situation from one of perfect happiness and security. If the Court is prudent, it will yield to the first necessity, rather than hazard the last; and will then have been fortunate that it arrived so speedily and at once. A change is preferable to impeachments or to outrages of the mob. I abhor bloodshed and violence, and heartily wish we may have a quiet revolution in the Administration. Should authority interpose to preserve them, it will risk its own annihilation and theirs; indeed, it ceases to be authority when it resorts to force. It delegates its power to force, becomes subject to force, refers the contest to the decision of opposite forces, which is choosing chance for arbiter, and never recovers till placid acquiescence gives authority its own true energy.

You shall hear again as events arise; which probably will be numerous. Things cannot remain in the present state, nor fall back into their usual channel without a change or worse convulsions.

Lady Catherine Pelham[1] is dead, at four-score. We remnants of happier times should not be sorry to quit a scene so different from what we remember. We aged know how few swim through a turbulent sea to the haven where they would be. Waves press on waves; new actors thrust aside those who commenced the commotion: —but I am running into reflections. I return to pray for tranquillity for my country. If it is not my lot to see it, I shall but escape so much anguish more as I should feel if witness to its calamities.

[1] Sister of John Manners, third Duke of Rutland, and widow of Henry Pelham, First Lord of the Treasury.—WALPOLE.

1901. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 27, 1780.

UNAPT as you are to enquire after news, dear Sir, you wish to have Admiral Rodney's victory confirmed.[1] I can now assure you, that he has had a considerable advantage, and took at least four Spanish men-of-war, and an Admiral, who they say is since dead of his wounds. We must be glad of these deplorable successes—but I heartily wish we had no longer occasion to hope for the destruction of any of our species—but, alas! it looks as if devastation would still open new fields of blood! The prospect darkens even at home—but however you and I may differ in our political principles, it would be happy if everybody would pursue theirs with as little rancour. How seldom does it happen in political contests, that any side can count anything but its wounds! your habitudes seclude you from meddling in our divisions: so do my age and my illnesses me. Sixty-two is not a season for bustling among young partisans. Indeed, if the times grow perfectly serious, I shall not wish to reach sixty-three. Even a superannuated spectator is then a miserable being; for though insensibility is one of the softenings of old age, neither one's feelings nor enjoyments can be accompanied with tranquillity. We veterans must hide ourselves in inglorious security, and lament what we cannot prevent; nor shall be listened to, till misfortunes have brought the actors to their senses; and then it will be too late, or they will calm themselves faster than we could preach—but I hope, the experience of the last century, will have some operation and check our animosities. Surely, too, we shall recollect the ruin a civil war would bring on, when accompanied by such collaterals as French and Spanish wars. Providence alone can steer us amidst all these rocks. I shall watch the interposition of its ægis with anxiety and humility. It saved us this last summer, and nothing else I am sure did; but often the mutual follies of enemies are the instruments of Heaven. If it pleases not to inspire wisdom, I shall be content if it extricates us by the reciprocal blunders and oversights of all parties—of which, at least, we ought never to despair. It is almost

[1] Admiral Sir George Rodney, who had been dispatched to the relief of Gibraltar, the garrison of which was much distressed for provisions, after taking a convoy of Spanish ships bound to the Caraccas, fell in, on the 16th of February, off Cape St. Vincent, with the Spanish fleet, commanded by Don Juan Langara, which he defeated, and captured four sail of the line.—WRIGHT.

my systematic belief, that as cunning and penetration are seldom exerted for good ends, it is the absurdity of mankind that often acts as a succedaneum, and carries on and maintains the equilibrium that Heaven designed should subsist. Adieu, dear Sir! Shall we live to lay down our heads in peace? Yours ever.

28th.—A second volume of Sir George Rodney's exploits is arrived to-day. I do not know the authentic circumstances, for I have not been abroad yet, but they say he has taken four more Spanish ships of the line and five frigates; of the former one of ninety guns. Spain was sick of the war before—how fortunate if she would renounce it!

I have just got a new 'History of Leicester,' in six small volumes. It seems to be superficial; but the author is young, and talks modestly; which, if it will not serve instead of merit, makes one at least hope he will improve, and not grow insolent on age and more knowledge. I have also received from Paris a copy of an illumination from La Cité des Dames of Christina of Pisa, in the French King's library. There is her own portrait with three allegoric figures. I have learnt much more about her, and of her amour with an English peer;[1] but I have not time to say more at present.

1902. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 3, 1780.

As my last letter probably alarmed you, I write again to tell you that nothing decisive has happened. The troops of the Palace even rallied a little yesterday on Mr. Burke's Bill of Reformation, or Reduction, yet with evident symptoms of *caution;* for Lord North, who wished to defer the second reading, ventured to put it only to next Wednesday, instead of to-day; and would have carried a longer adjournment with still greater difficulty, for his majority was but of 35, and the minority remained 195, a very formidable number. The Associations in the counties increase, though not rapidly: yet it will be difficult for the Court to stem such a torrent; and, I imagine, full as difficult for any man of temper to direct them wholesomely. Ireland is still more impetuous.

Fortunately, happily, the tide abroad seems turned. Sir George Rodney's victory proves more considerable than it appeared at first.

[1] John Montacute, Earl of Salisbury.—Wright.

It secures Gibraltar, eases your Mediterranean a little, and must vex the Spaniards and their monarch, not satisfied before with his cousin of Bourbon. Admiral Parker has had great success too amongst the latter's transports. Oh! that all these elements of mischief may jumble into peace! Monsieur Necker alone shines in the quarter of France; but he is carrying the war into the domains of the Church, where one cannot help wishing him success. If he can root out monks, the Pope will have less occasion to allow *gras*, because we cannot supply them with *maigre*.[1] It is droll that the Protestant Necker, and we Protestant fishmongers, should overset the system of fasting; but ancient Alcorans could not foresee modern contingencies.

I have told you that politics absorb all private news. I am going to a ball this evening, which the Duke and Duchess of Bolton give to their Royal Highnesses of Gloucester, who have now a very numerous Court. It seems very improper for me to be at a ball; but you see that, on the contrary, it is propriety that carries me thither. I am heartily weary both of diversions and politics, and am more than half inclined to retire to Strawberry. I have renounced dining abroad, and hide myself as much as I can; but can one pin on one's breast a label to signify, that, though one is sensible of being Methusalem in constitution, one must sometimes be seen in a crowd for such and such reasons? I do often exaggerate my pleas of bad health; and, could I live entirely alone, would proclaim myself incurable; but, should one repent, one becomes ridiculous by returning to the world; or one must have a companion, which I never will have; or one opens a door to legatees, if one advertises ill-health. Well! I must act with as much common sense as I can; and, when one takes no part, one must temper one's conduct; and, when the world is too young for one, not shock it, nor contradict it, nor affix a peculiar character, but trust to its indifference for not drawing notice, when one does not desire to be noticed. Rabelais's 'Fais ce que tu voudras' is not very difficult when one wishes to do nothing. I have always been offended at those who will belong to a world with which they have nothing to do. I have perceived that every age has not only a new language and new modes, but a new way of articulating. At first I thought myself grown deaf when with young people; but perceived that I understood my contem-

[1] The English supplied Leghorn with fish, till they lost the empire of the Mediterranean in the time of the American war.—WALPOLE.

poraries, though they whispered. Well! I must go amongst those I do not comprehend so well, but shall leave them when they go to supper.

1903. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, March 6, 1780.

I HAVE this moment received your portrait in glass, dear Sir, and am impatient to thank you for it, and tell you how much I value it. It is better executed than I own I expected, and yet I am not quite satisfied with it. The drawing is a little incorrect, the eyes too small in proportion, and the mouth exaggerated. In short, it is a strong likeness of your features, but not of your countenance, which is better and more serene. However, I am enough content to place it at Strawberry amongst all my favourite, brittle, transitory relics, which will soon vanish with their founder—and with his no great unwillingness for himself.

I take it ill, that you should think I should suspect you of asking *indirectly* for my 'Noble Authors'—and much more if you would not be so free as to ask for them *directly*—a most trifling present surely, and from you who have made me a thousand! I know I have some copies in my old house in Arlington Street, I hope of both volumes, I am sure of the second. I will soon go thither and look for them.

I have gone through the six volumes of 'Leicester.' The author is so modest and so humble, that I am quite sorry it is so very bad a work; the arrangement detestable, the materials trifling, his reflections humane but silly. He disposes all under reigns of Roman emperors and English kings, whether they did anything or nothing at Leicester. I am sorry I have such predilection for the histories of particular counties and towns: there certainly does not exist a worse class of reading.

Dr. E. made me a visit last week. He is not at all less vociferous for his disgrace. I wish I had any Guinea-fowls. I can easily get you some eggs from Lady Ailesbury, and will ask her for some, that you may have the pleasure of rearing your own chicks—but how can you bear their noise? they are more discordant and clamorous than peacocks. How shall I convey the eggs?

I smiled at Dr. Kippis's bestowing the victory on Dean Milles, and a sprig on Mr. Masters. I regard it as I should, if the Sexton of Broad Street, St. Giles's, were to make a lower bow to a cheese-

monger of his own parish than to me. They are all three haberdashers of small wares, and welcome to each other's civilities. When such men are summoned to a jury on one of their own trade, it is natural they should be partial. They do not reason, but recollect how much themselves have overcharged some yards of buckram. Adieu!

P.S. Mr. Pennicott has shown me a most curious and delightful picture. It is Rose, the royal gardener, presenting the first pine-apple raised in England to Charles II.[1] They are in a garden, with a view of a good private house, such as there are several at Sunbury and about London. It is by far the best likeness of the King I ever saw; the countenance cheerful, good-humoured, and very sensible. He is in brown lined with orange, and many black ribbons, a large flapped hat, dark wig, not tied up, nor yet bushy, a point cravat, no waistcoat, a tasselled handkerchief, hanging from a low pocket. The whole is of the smaller landscape size, and extremely well coloured, with perfect harmony. It was a legacy from London, grandson of him who was partner with Wise.[2]

1904. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, March 13, 1780.

You compliment me, my good friend, on a sagacity that is surely very common. How frequently do we see portraits that have catched the features and missed the countenance or character, which is far more difficult to hit; nor is it unfrequent to hear that remark made.

I have confessed to you that I am fond of local histories. It is the general execution of them that I condemn, and that I call "the worst kind of reading." I cannot comprehend but that they might be performed with taste. I did mention this winter the new edition [by Rudder] of Atkyns's 'Gloucestershire,' as having additional descriptions of situations that I thought had merit. I have just got another, 'A View of Northumberland,' in two volumes, quarto, with

[1] This curious and characteristic picture was presented by Mr. Pennicott to Walpole, and sold at the Strawberry Hill sale for 22*l.* 1*s.* It is now in the possession of the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere, M.P.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] London and Wise, the great gardeners.—CUNNINGHAM.

cuts;[1] but I do not devour it fast; for the author's predilection is to Roman antiquities, which, such as are found in this island, are very indifferent, and inspire me with little curiosity. A barbarous country, so remote from the seat of empire, and occupied by a few legions that very rarely decided any great events, is not very interesting, though one's own country; nor do I care a straw for a stone that preserves the name of a standard-bearer of a cohort, or of a colonel's daughter. Then I have no patience to read the tiresome disputes of antiquaries to settle forgotten names of vanished towns, and to prove that such a village was called something else in Antoninus's 'Itinerary.' I do not say the Gothic antiquities I like are of more importance; but at least they exist. The site of a Roman camp, of which nothing remains but a bank, gives me not the smallest pleasure. One knows they had square camps—has one a clearer idea from the spot, which is barely distinguishable? How often does it happen that the lumps of earth are so imperfect, that it is never clear whether they are Roman, Druidic, Danish, or Saxon fragments: the moment it is uncertain, it is plain they furnish no specific idea of art or history, and then I neither desire to see or read of them. I have been diverted, too, by another work, in which I am personally a little concerned. Yesterday was published an octavo,[2] pretending to contain the correspondence of Hackman and Miss Ray, that he murdered. I doubt whether the letters are genuine; and yet, if fictitious, they are executed well, and enter into his character: hers appears less natural, and yet the editors were certainly more likely to be in possession of hers than his. It is not probable that Lord Sandwich should have sent what he found in her apartments to the press. No account is pretended to be given of how they came to light.

You will wonder how I should be concerned in this correspondence, who never saw either of the lovers in my days. In fact, my being dragged in is a reason for doubting the authenticity; nor can I believe that the long letter in which I am frequently mentioned could be written by the wretched lunatic. It pretends that Miss

[1] 'A View of Northumberland; with an Excursion to the Abbey of Melrose, in Scotland, in the Year 1776;' by William Hutchinson, F.A.S. Two volumes, 4to, 1778-80.—Wright.

[2] By Sir Herbert Croft, Bart.; a compound of fact and fiction, called 'Love and Madness, a Story too true, in a Series of Letters between Parties whose names would, perhaps, be mentioned, were they less known or less lamented.' London, 1780. The work ran through several editions.—Wright.

Ray desired him to give her a particular account of Chatterton. He does give a most ample one; but is there a glimpse of probability that a being so frantic should have gone to Bristol, and sifted Chatterton's sister and others with as much cool curiosity as Mr. Lort could do? and at such a moment! Besides, he murdered Miss Ray, I think, in March; my printed defence was not at all dispersed before the preceding January or February, nor do I conceive that Hackman could even see it. There are notes, indeed, by the editor, who has certainly seen it; but I rather imagine that the editor, whoever he is, composed the whole volume. I am acquitted of being accessory to the lad's death, which is gracious; but much blamed for speaking of his bad character, and for being too hard on his forgeries, though I took so much pains to specify the innocence of them; and for his character, I only quoted the words of his own editor and panegyrist. I did not repeat what Dr. Goldsmith told me at the Royal Academy, where I first heard of his death, that he went by the appellation of "The Young Villain;" but it is not new to me, as you know, to be blamed by two opposite parties. The editor has in one place confounded me and my uncle; who, he says (as is true), checked Lord Chatham for being too forward a young man in 1740. In that year I was not even come into Parliament; and must have been absurd indeed if I had taunted Lord Chatham with youth, who was, at least, six or seven years younger than he was; and how could he reply by reproaching me with old age, who was then not twenty-three? I shall make no answer to these absurdities, nor to any part of the work. Blunder, I see, people will, and talk of what they do not understand? and what care I? There is another trifling mistake of still less consequence. The editor supposes it was Macpherson who communicated 'Ossian' to me. It was Sir David Dalrymple who sent me the first specimen. Macpherson did once come to me, but my credulity was then a little shaken.

Lady Aylesbury has promised me Guinea-eggs for you, but they have not yet begun to lay. I am well acquainted with Lady Craven's little tale, dedicated to me.[1] It is careless and incorrect, but there are very pretty things in it. I will stop, for I fear I have written to you too much lately. One you did not mention: I think it was of the 28th of last month.

[1] See p. 315.—Cunningham.

1905. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 14, 1780.

I AM not going to tell you that the Administration is changed, for as yet it is not; but it is beaten. Yesterday, on Mr. Burke's bill, the Opposition carried the clause for the annihilation of the Board of Trade by a majority of eight votes, though the Lords of Trade voted in their own cause. There was a strange scene of Billingsgate between the Speaker and the Minister; the former stooping to turn *informer*, and accusing the latter of breach of promise on a lucrative job, in which Sir Fletcher was to have been advantaged. It is very Homeric war when demi-gods rail, and wound one another. Astrea was in the right to leave earth, when other divinities tread in mortal paths, and in such dirty ones. We, that have quitted the theatre, are a little scandalised at such doings, of whatever side one is. I wish well to my country, but I wish too that my countrymen deserved wishes a little better.

The Court still holds out; but there is no recovering the ground that is lost. An Opposition so successful will not loiter at Capua. All the mercenaries will follow Sir Fletcher, and pretend it is the cry of the nation that they obey. The longer, too, the citadel is maintained, the more impatient the people will be to have it taken, and the more they will be excited to expect it. In short, a speedy change is the best event that can happen. Passions are so heated, that a little may set them in a blaze; and, though reformation may be the cause, it is not good that reformers should be in a rage before they begin their work. They undo more than they can repair, punish without trial, and disgrace the service before they have effected it. It is the nature, too, of human torrents to turn round like whirlpools; but, as I have not time to tell you more facts, I certainly have none to make reflections, which age, taking itself for wisdom, is mighty apt to dispense. My letter is short, but that is all that is necessary to preparatives. I declare, in spite of my wisdom, that I do not guess what will happen. I pray for the peace of Jerusalem; but what the Pharisees or Sadducees will do next, I do not know.

1906. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1780.

The Court-stock, that last week was eight under par, is got up again to fifty-three above par. Yesterday, on Burke's Bill, the debate was on the King's Household; the clause for cashiering which was rejected at one in the morning by a majority of fifty-three, though the moment before that question the Ministers had been forced to let the Contractor's Bill pass without a division.

Still the career of the Opposition is certainly a little checked, and I think will not recover by the recess at Easter, when the Court can work more efficaciously than they: for they will separate, and the Court can work on separate men; and will not only have recovered spirits from this last advantage, but from being thunderstruck by the rapid progress of the spirit in the country. Other causes have contributed to lower the Opposition; causes arising from themselves. The profligate and blundering impudence of the Speaker gave the first shock. This was immediately followed by as dishonourable an attack on the same person, Lord North, by Temple Luttrell, one of the brothers of the Duchess of Cumberland, who brought a direct charge against the Minister for buying a borough, which Luttrell thought he himself had bought. He made his own corrupt practice very clear, and could not prove a tittle against Lord North. The accusation was voted frivolous. The Opposition, too, had thought to carry everything sword in hand, and, owing their late progress to the country petitions, they affected to transfer Parliamentary power to the associations, who were very ready to affect Parliamentary airs, and accordingly assumed cognisance of matters actually pending in Parliament. This has offended moderate men; and many, who approved the petitions, were alarmed at the associations—with good reason: for the deputation, composed of three members of each committee, which is assembled in London, are going to take large strides indeed, and intend to propose to their several counties to demand annual Parliaments, and to alter the mode of representation. The first would be an alteration of the Constitution, and the last a most dangerous violation of it; and very sorry should I be to see either attempted. Lord Rockingham, the Cavendishes, and that connection, strenuously resist these innovations. Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox push them impetuously, though at first both opposed

them: but the first *will* stick at nothing to gratify his ambition; and the latter *must* stick at nothing, so desperate is his situation. Thus, instead of trying soberly to correct and restore the Constitution, we are leaping at once to improving upon it; and thus the national spirit that had arisen, and might have done some service, will be wasted in chimerical projects, and only sow altercation. However, negative good it must have done, for it has checked profusion and waste; and has shown the Court that the lion was dormant, but not toothless.

You will perceive, perhaps, that my conjectures and prognostics vary; and it is natural you should conclude that I form my reasonings from the moment. So I do; that is, I conjecture from present appearances, but I reason from the causes that make appearances vary. Bodies of men, multitudes, do not act upon one regular system: in the present case, the committee started out of the earth, were not set on foot by the leaders of the Opposition, and will not be led by them, at least till they have been humoured by them for some time. Besides, their own leaders may not have just the same views as the Parliamentary leaders; and the more articles either or both frame for the political creed in which they are to agree, into the more sects they will split. So much the better, if any part would violate the Constitution. It is good that the Court should know it will be resisted if it attempts against the Constitution: but as no country ever yet had so good an one, though not perfect, I do not desire anybody should mend it; because I do not know that they will not make more errors than they found, and I have not so high an opinion of the virtue or wisdom of the present age as to discern the sublime legislators who can improve the system laid down at the Revolution. To that point let us always return when necessary. It will be time enough to make improvements afterwards.

Observe, this letter is but a week younger than my last. Your nephew says you complained of my silence, but owned it was occasioned by the delay of two or three posts. I never was so diligent. Now I shall relax a little. The Parliament will go into Easter quarters the day after to-morrow for ten days, and I shall go out of town on Friday. It will be a *grim repose*[1] for them; but at least you will not expect events in the holidays. It will be better that we should run into speculative controversies than into a civil war;—we are every day on the point of single combats. Yesterday one was

[1] Gray's 'Bard.'—CUNNINGHAM.

very near between Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fullarton, Lord Stormont's late Secretary at Paris; for, I assure you, terms are no more managed than in the Senate of Rome, where duels were not the fashion. Well! good night; or I should be too late for the post.

1907. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, March 22, 1780.

Monday, the day you left London, exhibited a scene that has already produced martial consequences, or a second part to the History of Adam and Charles Fox. I do not mean the Ministerial victory in defence of the Household: no, I speak of a single combat. Mr. Fullarton (Lord Stormont's late Secretary at Paris), broiling over the censure passed on him and his regiment in the House of Lords by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Shelburne, particularly the latter, took advantage of the estimate of the Army to launch out into a violent invective on the Earl, whom he named, but was stopped by Charles Fox and Barré. Not content, nor waiting to see if Lord Sh[elburne] would resent, he sent the latter an account of what he not only had said but intended to have said, if not interrupted; the sum total of which was to have been that his Lordship's conduct had been a compound of insolence, cowardice, and falsehood. Very well; but to heap indiscretion on passion, he reproached Lord Shelburne with having, as *he had heard abroad*, kept a correspondence with the enemies of his country. My Lord replied, that the best answer he could give, was to desire Mr. F[ullarton] would meet him the next morning in Hyde Park at five o'clock. They met accordingly: Lord Frederick Cavendish was the Earl's second; Lord Balcarras, Fullarton's. Lord Shelburne received a ball in the groin, but the wound is slight and he was so cool, that being asked how he did, he looked at the place, and said, "Why, I don't think Lady Shelburne will be the worse for it." This second Scotch extravagance will serve to balance Sir Fletcher's and Temple Luttrell's late absurdities. I wish I knew what would repair one that I have seen to-day, Mr. Wyvill's Manifesto.[1] You told me he was a sensible man. How could he set his name to such a performance, which I hear is drawn by a Mr. Bromley? I never saw

[1] The Rev. Christopher Wyvill:—'Lord Rockingham and his Contemporaries, by the Earl of Albemarle, vol. ii., p. 400.—Cunningham.

such a composition of obscurity, bombast, and futility, nor a piece so liable to be turned into ridicule. The third paragraph beginning "let any man look back to the laws," I read two or three times before I could guess at the meaning. In the next appears this fustian sally, "the enormous, the compactly accumulated, the all-devouring influence of the Crown." Why, your Yorkshire squires must think the Giant of Wantley is come again to swallow houses and churches like geese and turkeys! The vague and indefinite manner of stating the resolutions at the end, and which betrays a consciousness of their impropriety, destroys all the buckram that was crowded into the rest of the memorial; and the waiving annual Parliaments, till all is done that annual Parliaments are pretended to be wanted to do, is such retrograde or topsyturvy logic as will give nobody a higher idea of the legislator.

In short, my dear friend, we shall lose all the benefit of the present spirit by the whimsies of men that have not common sense, nor can express even what they mean. The candidates are to satisfy the electors by signing the association or *otherwise*,—a very definite sentence indeed in a decree of a tribunal that sets itself to change the Constitution! Mercy on us! were there not faults enough to amend, but we must leave them; ay, let the people forget them, and turn their heads with points that will engender endless litigation and dispute! Bring them back, I beseech you, if you can, to some sobriety, or, depend upon it, the cause will grow ridiculous. Such innovations dictated by deputies of thirteen counties at a tavern in London, and announced in so wretched a manner and with so little argument, can but be a joke. An arbitrary addition of an hundred members at once without any deliberation or discussion, and including Scotland whether it will or not, and of which not a single county has petitioned, is surely very unwise; but I will say no more. I lament the misapplication of the Nation's returning sense; we shall be lost in controversy on speculative points, and the Court will call itself defenders of the Constitution by resisting such unprecedented methods of altering it.

Dr. Warton was so kind as to call on me this morning and made me very happy, as I was glad to be acquainted with Gray's friend. He was three hours yesterday at Strawberry Hill with Mr. Stonhewer. I did not intend to pursue you so soon, but I could not resist telling you of the duel. However, I will not continue to interrupt you but on good occasions, as I trust to your abilities for managing your wild associates.

1908. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, March 30, 1780.

I CANNOT be told that you are extremely ill, and refrain from begging to hear that you are better. Let me have but one line; if it is good, it will satisfy me. If you was not out of order, I would scold you for again making excuses about the 'Noble Authors;' it was not kind to be so formal about a trifle.

We do not differ so much in politics as you think, for when they grow too serious, they are so far from inflaming my zeal, they make me more moderate; and I can as easily discern the faults on my own side as on the other; nor would assist Whigs more than Tories in altering the constitution. The project of annual parliaments, or of adding a hundred members to the House of Commons, would, I think, be very unwise, and will never have my approbation—but a temperate man is not likely to be listened to in turbulent times; and when one has not youth and lungs, or ambition, to make oneself attended to, one can only be silent and lament, and preserve oneself blameless of any mischief that is done or attempted.

1909. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, April 7, 1780.

I CONCLUDE you are now returned to your cure of *souls*, and will be consequently at more leisure, and that one may hear from you. In the mean time you will be glad to hear of the Opposition's victory on the petitions last night, when they had a majority of eighteen. The 6th of April ought for ever to be a red-lettered day, and at least as solemn a festival as the 29th of May, for the question carried was, that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increased, and *ought to be diminished.* I adopt the whole sentence into my revolution-creed, and would have added to Magna Charta, that whenever that influence has increased and is increasing, it ought to be diminished. In truth, after the five last years I did not imagine there was vigour enough left in *old* England to take such a jump backwards; but it confirms me more firmly in my opinion that the medium of wisdom consists in restoring the Constitution and not in trying tricks upon it. Reinstate it in its rights, bind

them tight with ribs of brass, consecrate with the most solemn religion the sacredness of juries, of the Habeas Corpus, and of the liberty of the press; but innovate not on the person of Parliaments —and for the swelling the number of representatives, I abominate the doctrine. I have an objection of great weight with me, that I will not utter in a letter that may be opened. For written engagements and annual parliaments, I am clear that the first are often abused, and as likely to be turned against the authors; and for the second, they would soon annihilate the dignity of Parliament, or grow such a nuisance that very likely prerogative would be adopted as a counter-poison.

I shall die in these sentiments as corollaries to those in which I have lived, for I shall not see the event of my predictions. I have been very ill the beginning of this week, and felt as if I had something of an universal palsy, which I suppose was fancy, which I suppose was nervous, which I suppose was caused by the bitter east; but, in short, a very frail tenement is tumbling, and what signifies whether it is toppled down by wind getting in at the garret window, or by the crumbling of the foundations?

I have gotten three comfortably fat volumes in octavo of ancient French Fabliaux,[1] but they look more good-humoured from their corpulency than from intrinsic gaiety, as many plump men do. The fables are trite as that of Patient Grisel; and the notes, which are the best part, as full of antique usages, are mortally heavy and devoid of taste; but I think you will like to see them, and will send them when I have gone through them, if you will point out a conveyance. But I am diverted at present to a larger and stupendously magnificent work about nothing, only two uncommonly tall quartos containing the memoirs of that singular being Thomas Hollis; a most excellent man, a most immaculate Whig, but as simple a poor soul as ever existed, except his editor,[2] who has given extracts from the good creature's diary, that are very near as anile as Ashmole's. There are thanks to God for reaching every birthday, prayers for continuance in virtue and nobleness of designs, and thanks to Heaven for her Majesty's being delivered of a third or fourth prince, *and God send he may prove a good man;* and continual

[1] 'Fabliaux ou Contes du XII^e^ et du XIII^e^ Siècles, avec des notes historiques, etc., par M. Le Grand,' 5 vols. 1781. New Edition. Many of these Tales have been translated in the happiest manner, by the late Mr. Lewis Way, 1 vol. 1796. —MITFORD.

[2] Archdeacon Blackburn.—CUNNINGHAM.

apprehensions of designs of the Jesuits against him. Then there are faithful journals of the days on which he went to such a bookseller's, and bought such a set of books, which he gave to such a public library! This is all splendidly printed and decorated with cuts by Cipriani and Bartolozzi, and with fine prints of all our saints, Algernon Sydney, Milton, Locke, &c. In short, imagine the history of an old woman that goes to a mercer's to buy a bombazine with etchings of the deaths of Brutus and Cassius.

You will not soon, I doubt, see in print the tracts of Theophilus and Eraclius *de arte pingendi*. I had begun to gather subscriptions, but poor Raspe is arrested by his tailor. I have sent him a little money, and he hopes to recover his liberty, but I question whether he will be able to struggle on here.[1]

1910. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, April 8, 1780.

THE return of the Parliament will naturally make you impatient for a letter, though you will not have expected so much as this will announce. As I am not going to write a romance or an epic poem, I will not keep your attention in suspense, but tell you at once that

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *Aston, April* 9, 1780.

THINGS went at York so differently from what I knew you would wish, that I could not prevail on myself to give you any account of them, and though I think I could have defended the good opinion I entertain of Mr. Wyvill (who certainly cannot be called a fool because he assented to a majority who espoused a foolish Memorial, which that majority would have carried the publication of in spite of him), yet I thought it better to let you have the account of the whole proceeding from the papers, and have only to add that you may depend upon it the general sense of the county is for supporting the measures they have adopted, and therefore certain of our friends have lost much popularity by not concurring in those measures. Whether rightly or wrongly, time must show. For my part, I only feel chagrin and disappointed. What can be said of men who, after proving that there has been a waste of public money for the purposes of Parliamentary corruption to such an enormous excess as would almost authorise a civil war, tell you very coolly, "that it is too rash a step to aim at a Parliamentary Reform." But I know we shall not agree on this subject, and therefore I drop it. All I have to add at present is, that I beg you would direct your letters to me at Aston, near Worksop, because a new post from thence to Sheffield now passes my door three times a week. Thrice in this week has the snow covered my little copse, and thrice melted, yet under an atmosphere as cold as Christmas, no grass and hardly any vegetation, yet my guests were flown, my house warm, and I feel at present in tolerable composure. A line from you at all times is one of my best treats. Believe me, dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

W. MASON.

the Court has received a signal defeat already; in which, as well as in the preparations for the engagement, their generals have manifested strange negligence and want of conduct.

On Wednesday, on the question of the new-raised regiments, in which Mr. Fullarton's was comprised, the Ministers carried them in the House of Commons by a majority of nearly forty.

The next day was appointed for consideration of the petitions from the counties and towns; about forty of which, on vast parchments subscribed by thousands of names, were heaped on the table. The Opposition had kept secret their intended motions. The very first, made by Mr. Dunning, was a thundering one: the words were, "that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." The walls could not believe their own ears; they had not heard such language since they had a wainscot. The Ministers, as if this winter were at all like the five last, poorly tried that the chairman should leave the chair; but that would not take now. Thomas Pitt, who never spoke so well before, drew a terrible picture of the difference he had felt between his former journey abroad and his last; from what he knew of the dissimilar situations of his country, then so flourishing, now so fallen! and from what he heard foreigners say of it. This apostrophe, addressed very bitterly to Lord North, threw him into a rage against the Opposition, that produced mighty tumult. The details of all this, and more, you will see in the papers. I have not room for particulars. In short, late at night Mr. Dunning's motion was carried by 233 to 215, and, as uncommonly, was instantly reported to the House.

The blow seems to me decisive; for this committee is to continue sitting on the petitions, will exclude any other business, will extract from the petitions whatever propositions it pleases, may ground on those what charges it has a mind, and will carry along all those who have already voted on that foundation; so that, if the Ministers attempt to make a further stand, nothing seems so probable as their being personally accused. To combat on the same field of battle after being vanquished, will, in my opinion, be frenzy. It is to prevent very great mischief that I heartily wish them to retreat before it is too late. The Constitution is vigorous enough, when a sudden turn of the tide can, in three months, sweep away a deep-rooted Administration. A torrent opposed may damage the foundations of the Constitution itself.

These are my apprehensions; but whoever would preach to two

heated antagonists is sure of being listened to by neither, and so I am come hither quietly to ponder my own reflections.

Whoever has seen much, and has read a little, must know that human affairs are subject to these returns of troubles. Great or little, they strike the present spectator as infinitely more momentous than any greater crisis, of which he has only read coolly. I do not pretend that this is a common or small moment; nay, it may have very distant consequences. But one so calm as I am grown, and so retired as I live, knows that even the disorders of nations subside after a time, and therefore I have at least as much curiosity for the conclusion as observation on the events as they pass; though, considering my age and caducity, my curiosity may happen not to be gratified. Well! all one's own time is but a portion of an unfinished history. One does not come on the stage precisely as a memorable period commences, nor quit it just when the curtain drops. Every one is to the history of his country like his own hairs to himself,—millions fall before the body is worn out.

The orator Dr. Jebb is not the physician, but his brother. I shall stop here, because this is not to set out till Tuesday; and as I shall return to town on Monday, which probably will be no neutral day, I shall reserve the rest of my paper for its contingencies. Oh! I had forgotten that in my last I spoke of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fullarton as having been likely to fight. My letter was scarcely on horseback before they did fight, as you have seen in the papers. The Earl was wounded in the groin, just where Charles Fox was; on which Sir George Savile said wittily, that Adam and Fullarton had tried not only to cut off them, but their posterity. It was odd that the same pistols gave both wounds, for Adam had borrowed Fullarton's.

April 11.

Religious prophets were more prudent than I; they commonly formed their predictions *after* events, not before. Would not one have thought that I, who have often denied myself guesses, should have been on my guard against soothsaying?—yet here am I already caught, and the dupe of my own penetration: not but the Administration was beaten again yesterday; yet only by *two*—just enough to contradict this letter, and bring poor me to shame: in short, nothing is consistent for two days. Fluctuation is the ruling demon of the times, and perhaps a propitious one! it may prevent a more mischievous devil from rioting at will. Take notice, that, while any of these incubi reign, I will not be their Flamen and give out their

oracles. I will henceforth only tell you where they have left prints of their footsteps.

1911. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.[1]

April 13, 1780.

You have sent me a very temperate letter, I own it to your honour, and with great pleasure, as I interest myself in your dignity. I will observe your moderation for many reasons, and chiefly for that I do not pretend to match myself with you. Besides I am heartily for union, so much, that it was a principal cause of my dislike of the introduction of new and speculative, that is, experimental, Articles, which could only introduce difference of opinion and contradiction, and consequently would divide our party, and unite and strengthen the other. The Constitution, as it was at the end of the last reign, made us the happiest [in which I include liberty as the first ingredient], richest, and most glorious nation in Europe. Do allow me to think such a constitution perfect enough. I want to see that constitution restored.—Amend it afterwards if you will or can.

What happened the other day[2] proves to my sense that there is still strength enough left in the Constitution to work itself whole. When in less than five months the spirit of *part* of the people can force, or intimidate the most corrupt and most Tory Parliament that ever was, to add a codicil to Magna Charta, the House of Commons does not want an hundred members more. Few Houses of Commons ever did so much for Liberty; nor would I for the universe touch a hair of a system that has conferred such a benefit. You yourself, as one of the first authors of that grace, ought to be fond and tender of an engine by which you have wrought so much good; for should the vote be expunged from the journals to-morrow, it would remain a foundation of right and a precedent to all posterity.

Will you allow me to use the freedom to differ with you on the consequence you draw from the question you ask?—that is, whether the excess of money wasted in pensions does not call for a reform

[1] Endorsed "To the Rev. William Mason, but not sent, as too strong."—Cunningham.

[2] Vote of House of Commons that the Influence of the Crown ought to be diminished.—Wright.

of Parliament. I am sorry you added, *almost for more!* but on that head I should certainly not join you: *cuncta prius tentanda.* In the first place, I do not think the alteration of the present modes would at all prevent corruption. Take away the means of corruption, the effect would fall of course. But surely you do not think that the influence of the Crown on Parliament depends on the dry money it has to give! So far from it, the want of money was a principal cause of the American war. Contracts, commissions, and ten thousand other sorts of bribes infinitely exceed all the votes that are purchased by what the Crown dispenses out of its own fob. Ask your dear Tory Knights of Shires whether all their prerogative principles, which never reconciled them to the House of Hanover in the late reign, have not been wonderfully cleared up by the operation of silent douceurs from the establishment of a Militia. Oh! my dear Sir, allow me, who have never budged from the scene of action, to know, at least to think I know, more of these practices, than you who have been warbling in immaculate groves. In truth, it is from indignation at much I know and see, that I can talk cordially but with very few. When our loudest reformers have started out of the mire, like St. Paul, to turn apostles, I recoil and cry, No, no, *non tali auxilio!*—but I will say no more. I do not erect my own judgment as a standard, but I must follow it. I am for adhering to fundamentals that I know: I cannot tell what the consequences of innovations would be. At least, I must have a thorough experience of the abilities of those who give themselves for legislators of novelties, and who to me are but empirics till they have demonstrated their mission. I must own too that their Memorial gave me a woful opinion of their capacity. I never knew but Oliver Cromwell who was so great a man that he could afford to talk gibberish.

The majority of the late Minority consisted on Monday in but two. Do not you see that the Tories are afraid of their own success? would you give them an hundred head more? Jove would thank you for such a hecatomb; but I am to blame, and am ungrateful to dispute with you—excuse an old dying Whig!

Mr. Hollis's 'Memoirs' are not published, but sent as presents to the elect. They are certainly drawn up by some Dissenter, yet, though often silly, often vulgar, ignorant, and prejudiced, they contain some curious facts. They show how the Episcopalian spirit of that arch-hypocrite Secker contributed to the American war; and there is one remarkable anecdote breathing the full effluvia of

the reign: Mr. Hollis sent to the British Museum a satirical print against the Jesuits—the curators would not receive it.

There is one paragraph in your letter that I forgot till reading it again, and to which I must speak, not to dispute, but to lament. You say our friends have lost much of their popularity by not concurring on the *new* Articles, which the country in general adopt. Does not this prove what I said, that these novel articles will disunite the party? You will see that they have done so; and they who have lost ground in Yorkshire, will gain it in any other places —look at the resolutions from Cambridge. Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox were as much against the new Articles as Lord J. Cavendish; but being more pliant politicians, gulped them—for a while. Yet Lord Sh[elburne]'s own Wiltshire has disclaimed the Association, which loses ground every *day;* since people have been told that they may have new Articles tacked to their subscriptions at the fancy of any private leader of a shire. I, you well know, have not attachment to Lord Rockingham, nor have even once talked to the Cavendishes on this chapter; yet I confess I am shocked and disgusted that men, certainly honest and conscientious, and lovers of their country, should become unpopular, because they will not swallow implicitly novel nostrums, neither discussed nor examined, very problematic, and imposed arbitrarily and inquisitorially as articles of faith or as conditions of election. This seems to me to flow from as despotic a spirit as any ordinance of a Court, and to be as bad as exacting subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. For my part I should glory in such unpopularity; but, my dear friend, depend upon it, whoever dictates his own reveries, and insists on their being tests, will soon demolish all that *you* have done.

A dictatorial ascendant must be the work of time. I told you early that demagogues of districts would split us into petty factions, and do the business of the Court. The wise, the great man, who is able to conduct the whole party, has not yet appeared. You, who have more sense than your whole country together, must steer and temper it, and not let your work be taken out of your hands and maimed by fantastic legislators, who are vain of their own ideas and do not comprehend the conduct of a great machine. Every day produces some new project or new scent; and we shall be bewildered before anything is corrected; the consequence of engrafting new and heterogeneous propositions on a simple theme; disputable propositions, of which the expedience or inexpedience

could not be known beforehand, and which were promulged before they had been weighed—no indication of modesty or discretion: in one word, here are already articlists and non-articlists. I have dwelt on this matter, to show the danger of precipitation or obstinacy. I can be of no use but to warn where I espy a rock: I foresaw the courtiers would clamour on innovations of the Constitution, and already their papers teem with those complaints. It can be nothing to me, who shall never be in Parliament, how many are sent thither, or for how long, or for how little; but I tremble at touching fundamentals, and love no precedents that may cut two ways. There is another capital argument with me against disputable experiments, and against losing time on them. Here has been an amazing change in opinions in a moment. The tide may turn as rapidly; and whatever is gained extra, order on such occasions is the first thing subverted on a new revolution, whereas what is *restored* to the constitution gains new strength, like a broken bone that is more firmly knit after a fracture.

I have done, and done with the subject, but it lay heavy on my mind. Use your discretion; you have more solidity as well as more parts than I. We may disagree in modes, but never shall in essentials, for we both mean the same thing. Nor do I want to convert you to my opinion; but as you are an active man, and I only a speculative one, there is no harm in my advertising you of whatever I think may prejudice the cause, and you will always judge for yourself whether I have reason or not. Adieu!

Yours most amicably,

H. W.

1912. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1780.

You have sent me so temperate and obliging a letter, that I most certainly will not dispute with you, what I never wish to do. I will not say a word more on the novel Articles. In fact they cease to alarm me, for they are generally distasted, and not likely to make their fortune. The counties of Northampton, Buckingham, Cambridge, and Wiltshire have rejected them, though Wilts is Lord Shelburne's province; but he, I know, and Charles Fox were utterly against them, and only complied for the moment. In short, it was a disastrous project, has disgusted many of the Opposition, and thence delighted the Court, who triumph on Mr. Wyvill's

attempt to remove subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles, and who would now impose tests, subscriptions, and engagements to arbitrary and indigested plans of his own.

I am sorry for what you tell me of the new unpopularity of certain persons—not for their sakes, for can they regard it? Are honest conscientious men to lose credit with their countrymen for not swallowing implicitly any crude and disputable propositions that any man takes for an infallible nostrum. What measures of a Court could be more despotic? And allow me to say, that any man who would dictate to a whole party, ought to have given proofs of consummate abilities before he assumed so dictatorial a tone, and certainly before he will have his mission universally acknowledged.

In good faith, my dear Sir, it requires no great sagacity to foresee that such rashness and obstinacy will soon split the Opposition into an hundred petty factions. The Court is one compact body and uniform. The Opposition is a most heterogeneous assemblage; and as the great man who is to conduct them has not yet appeared, I doubt that without much discretion and address the present spirit will degenerate, and be lost in flippant projects that will clash with each other, and whose leaders will hate each other more than their common enemies. Your good sense must bridle those under your diocese, and even if you think my advice not sound, it may not be useless to have some too circumspect, as well as others too enterprising. The recovery of a majority of twenty-six last week by the Administration shows how little cordiality there was in the defection of the Tories. They are no doubt but temporising with their constituents; perhaps have dispensations, and certainly would have them for taking engagements, which they would not observe when their elections were secured. Some Whigs deserted too, because their electors are officers of revenue. In short, I have said enough to lead you to reflect what variety of interests ought to be weighed, before disputable questions are converted into articles of faith It is good that an army should be warm, but the generals ought to be very cool.

The House of Lords has rejected the Contractors' Bill, a measure rash enough on their side, unless, as I suspect, they have received new assurances from the Tories. A strange event has suspended the consequences of that rejection, I mean the Speaker's [Sir Fletcher Norton's] retirement. It is generally thought his successor will be your friend Frederic Montagu.[1]

[1] Mr. Cornwall was chosen.—CUNNINGHAM.

Mr. Hollis's 'Memoirs' are not published, but sent as presents to the elect. They are certainly drawn up by some Dissenter, yet, though often silly, vulgar, ignorant, and prejudiced, they contain some curious facts. They show how the Episcopalian spirit of that arch-hypocrite Secker contributed to the American War, and there is one remarkable anecdote breathing the full effluvia of the reign: Mr. Hollis sent to the British Museum a satirical print on the Jesuits. The Trustees would not receive it.

You have seen the Russian Declaration, I conclude. The European Powers will probably oblige us to acknowledge the Independence and free trade of America; it will be kinder than they intend it to us, and will give repose to those poor sufferers whom our country gentlemen devoted to destruction, and do not seem even in their hour of resipiscence to recollect.

I am glad you have recovered your Lares and Penates, but don't you find them a little more wanton than you left them? I hope before you commence your fourth book, that you will not be forced to purify your walks from the Deity of Gardens.

My last was sent by Rotherham, not having received your new route. Adieu!

1913. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1780.

Fluctuation is the present *mot* of the House of Commons. Lord North had a considerable majority, considering the moment, on Thursday. The question was to read a second time the Bill to disfranchise the Officers of the Revenue. As the increase of *them*, by the addition of taxes, has magnificently increased the influence of the Crown, the refusal of cashiering them as voters is not very consequential logic after the vote of the former week, that that influence ought to be diminished! The Court took a bolder step on Friday, and rejected the Bill for *dismembering* contractors, which the Commons had sent to the Lords, who threw it out. This measure would have created a raging flame in the Commons this very day—but the Commons are laid up in the person of their Speaker. He declared himself so exhausted in the chair on Friday, and so ill, that the tender House, to both sides of which his alternate virtues must be dear, have adjourned to this day sevennight: however, it is said he designs to abdicate. A greater quantity of fuel, no doubt, will be prepared on the Contractors' Bill; but premeditated conflagrations

do not always kindle like the combustibles of passion. The new tests of the Associations have been rejected by four or five counties. I am heartily glad. I like few or no tests, and not at all the changes of the Constitution at which they were aimed.

You say Prussia forbade Russia to assist us, to which she was inclined. Truly, she is a most passive or weathercock despot! Ladies, too, that are forbidden to please themselves, are seldom so passive as to exceed the commands of the prohibitor. And yet she has sent us a Memorial, or (in modern phrase for a bitter potion) a rescript, that will mightily manacle the vivacity of our privateers. As all Europe is obdurate, I wish they would go further, and one and all impose peace on us and our enemies. That would be mercy to mankind; but at what Ratisbon is there a precedent of such a pacification registered? The D'Alemberts and Diderots, who are so lavish of incense to philosophic sovereigns, are forced to content themselves with mighty problematic sparkles of philosophy!

I begin this letter, because I am here idle: perhaps I shall not finish it this week. I am sorry my *recommandé*[1] is so unwise for himself as not to cultivate you more. I am satisfied of his virtues, but am not so clear that he knows much of the world. I doubt his patriotism is a little of Spartan hue, that is, morose; at least I shall deem it so, if your humanity does not smooth it. *Here*, I believe it will soon be difficult to be allowed any moderation; but surely one has no occasion to wear one's badge constantly at the distance of above a thousand miles. Well; you have temper, and will not take notice of it. I am satisfied of your complaisance for my *protégés;* and, if they do not meet it as they ought, I am not so unreasonable as to expect or desire you to press it upon them. I remember Sir William Maynard was very impertinent on opposite politics.[2] You must smile as I do when I content neither side. Methinks it is a desirable certificate. One should have charity for all sorts of opinions on religion and government; for no person can be absolutely sure he is in the right on either. Were any mode in either self-evidently true, nobody could dispute on them; but, as men have disputed, fought, nay died, for almost every mode and against every mode, their probabilities are but a *peut-être*. I am a settled Whig; for, if one thinks, one must before my age have fixed one's creed by the lamp of one's own reason: but I have much

[1] Mr. Windham.—WALPOLE.

[2] Sir William Maynard was a Jacobite.—WALPOLE.

Quakerism in my composition, and prefer peace to doctrines. I have so much weakness and worldliness, too, in my nature, that, having a poor opinion of my own infallibility, I can but suspect myself of as much prejudice and passion as I descry in others;—one may be very sure of one's own faults, but one may judge rashly and unfairly on those of others.

22nd.

I could not amass complement enough for my letter, and shall therefore reserve it to Tuesday next. The mountain has been delivered of a tooth; *i. e.*, the Speaker has had one drawn, and will return to the House on Monday,—they say, for the rest of this session; though, *they say*, against the advice of the physicians. You see, when virtue seizes people late, it makes them risk even life itself in the service of their country!

25th.

I am but just come to town, and find that the livery of the House of Commons is still turned up with changeable, or rather is returned to the royal colours. Dunning moved yesterday to address the King that the Parliament might not be prorogued or dissolved till the demands of the petitions are satisfied. The motion was rejected by 254 to 203. On this repulse, the Opposition adjourned their committee to that day sevennight, to have time to meditate one decisive measure; which, if rejected, Charles Fox declared he should advise secession, as having no hopes of redress of grievances. That implies *recourse to the people.* As a new Parliament is so near, recourse to the people may imply that the people, if they will be relieved, must choose representatives accordingly. Such steps are constitutional; and, while we have those remedies, I hope we shall never have any other. The session will probably end much sooner than was expected; but when one guesses, from the sky, of the day, you must not depend upon such an almanack-maker.

1914. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, April 25, 1780.

It is not to boast of sagacity that I tell you that I have guessed rightly. The Tories have returned to the Court, and gave it yesterday a great majority on Dunning's motion for an address against proroguing or dissolving the Parliament till grievances were redressed. The motion was rejected by 254 to 203. Sir Roger

Newdigate, who has affected to have opened his prerogative eyes, though he owned he detested those to whom he had gone over, voted with many other true-blue friends in the majority. The Tories of Cheshire have played as signal a trick. I knew when they were set down as subscribers to the Association that they had sent no deputation thither, and if anybody presented himself there as deputed, that it was without authority, and only from zeal. This is not to dispute, but to justify myself to you, for having been less sanguine than you. I remember a notorious instance of Tory treachery to Lord Holland in the late reign, the particulars of which are too long for a letter. I have not so much spirit as you, and experience and age have made me still more diffident, but they do not shake my principles. They are even more firm on finding we are thus beaten; deceived I have not been, for I expected no better from an alliance with Tory country gentlemen, who hallooed the Crown to ravage America, and then attacked it because they had been such gulls. However, I rejoice that they have shown themselves; the Crown must dote on them as much as I do.

I was going to send you Fitzpatrick's excellent parody of George Selwyn's Advertisement to his electors at Gloucester, but I find it is in to-day's 'Courant,' and will certainly get into the other papers. In its room I will transcribe a Riddle, not with all its mysteries, for then it would be inexplicable. The ghosts of Odin and Gray must pardon my speaking so irreverently of what they alone could expound. This fragment I believe genuine, for the editor has not made it dance to Macpherson's hornpipe, nor pretends that there are clergymen living in the Highlands who have been able to say it by heart for these thousand years. This is an Icelandic stanza, the English of which, says Dr. Uno Von Troil, is, "I hang the round beaten gaping snake on the end of the bridge of the mountain bird at the gallows of Odin's shield."

The sense of this nonsense is, a Mr. Ihre affirms, "I put a ring on my finger." I do not lessen the enigma by giving you the solution, for now you are to make out *how* that can be. If you can, you deserve to be poet laureate of Hecla, for Dr. Von Troil says, "There were poets laureate in Iceland, though they have no laurel, nor anything else but volcanoes and boiling fountains, some scarlet, and some as white as milk." As you know I love poetry with images entirely new, you would oblige me with a pastoral in which should be a description of this landscape, and which Mrs. Cornelys, if still living, shall convert into a Ridotto.

I am but just come to town, and know nothing else; you can have nothing of a cat but her politics and her studies. Adieu!

1915. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

[*May*, 1780.]

The newspapers have told you all that I could have said, and that nothing has happened worth repeating or detailing. The spirit you *raised* is evaporated or split into a thousand branches by mismanagement. The Opposition is as much divided amongst themselves, as they and the Ministers; and those squabbles more than any other cause have re-established the predominance of the Court. The Bishop of St. Asaph showed me a sensible letter from his son, the Dean, who says, it was with much difficulty that he prevailed to have the committee of their county adjourned, and that it would have been infallibly dissolved if he had pressed the Association. In short, I can only lament that the sole chance we have had in so many years of recovering the vigour of this country has been thrown away. The Ministers, though detesting each other more than the factions in the Opposition, have had the sense not to quarrel, and they reap the benefit of *unanimity*, which we professed and could not observe for a moment.

Did you see 'Royal Reflections?' They are excellent, and I am persuaded were written by Fitzpatrick. The courtiers are restringing their lyres too. There is an ode, said to be written by Soame Jenyns, and I believe so from one or two strokes of humour, though in general a paltry performance.[1] The preface is an attack on Gray and you, who I am sure are our only Pindars. The conclusion ironically implores Liberty:—

> To shield us safe, beneath her guardian wings,
> From Law, Religion, Ministers, and Kings.

Soame Jenyns does think, I do not doubt, that Ministers ought to be our law, and kings our religion. When you are in your own-*issime* vein, I trust you will remember him.

You know, I suppose, that the Royal Academy at Somerset House is opened.[2] It is quite a Roman palace, and finished in perfect taste as well as boundless expense. It would have been a glorious appa-

[1] It is included in his Works, 4 vols. 12mo, 1790, and is called correctly in the Contents "a Burlesque Ode."— Cunningham.

[2] May, 1780, was the first Exhibition of the Royal Academy at Somerset House.— Cunningham.

rition at the conclusion of the great war; now it is an insult on our poverty and degradation. There is a sign-post by West of his Majesty holding the memorial of his late campaign, lest we should forget that he was at Coxheath when the French fleet was in Plymouth Sound. By what lethargy of loyalty it happened I do not know, but *there* is also a picture of Mrs. Wright modelling the head of Charles the First, and their Majesties contemplating it.[1] Gainsborough has five landscapes there, of which one especially is worthy of any collection, and of any painter that ever existed.[2]

There is come out a 'Life of Garrick,' in two volumes, by Davies the bookseller, formerly a player. It is written naturally, simply, without pretensions, nay, and without partiality (though under the auspices of Dr. Johnson), unless, as it seems, the prompter reserved all the flattery to himself, and according to an epigram on the late Queen and the Hermitage,—

whispered let the incense all be mine.

In consequence, the author [Davies] calls the pedant [Johnson] the greatest man of the age, and compares his trumpery tragedy of 'Irene' to 'Cato.' However, the work is entertaining, and deserves immortality for preserving that *sublime* saying of Quin (which, by the way, he profanes by calling it a *bon-mot*), who disputing on the execution of Charles I., and being asked by his antagonist by what law he was put to death, replied, "By all the laws he had left them." I wish you would translate it into Greek, and write it in your 'Longinus;' it has ten times more grandeur, force, and meaning than any thing he cites.

Apropos to the theatre, I have *read* the 'School for Scandal:' it is rapid and lively, but is far from containing the wit I expected from seeing it acted.

May I leap from the Stage to the Bench? Sir Thomas Rumbold, one of our Indian mushrooms, asked his father-in-law, the Bishop of Carlisle [Dr. Law],[3] to answer for a child that he had left in a parsley-bed of diamonds at Bengal. The good man consented; a man-child was born. The other godfather was the Nabob of Arcot,

[1] "202. 'Mrs. Wright modelling a head in wax.' . . . *J. Wright.*"—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Walpole's copy of 'The Exhibition Catalogue' for 1780, exhibits against the landscapes by Gainsborough, MS. expressions of "charming," "very spirited," "as admirable as the great masters." (*Fulcher's Life of Gainsborough*, 12mo, 1856.)—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, died 1787, father of the first Lord Ellenborough, Lord Chief Justice.—CUNNINGHAM.

—and the new Christian's name is —— Mahomet! What pity that Dr. Law was the godfather and not Bishop of Hagedorn or your Metropolitan!

Mr. Jones, the orientalist, is candidate for Oxford. On Tuesday was se'nnight Mrs. Vesey presented him to me. The next day he sent me an absurd and pedantic letter, desiring I would make interest for him. I answered it directly, and told him I had no more connection with Oxford than with the Antipodes, nor desired to have. I doubt I went a little further, and laughed at Dr. Blackstone, whom he quoted as an advocate for the rights of learning, and at some other passages in his letter. However, before I sent it, I inquired a little more about Mr. Jones, and on finding it was a circular letter sent to several, I did not think it necessary to answer it at all; and now I am glad I did not, for the man it seems is a staunch Whig, but very wrong-headed. He was tutor to Lord Althorp, and quarrelled with Lord Spencer, who he insisted should not interfere at all in the education of his own son.

There are just appeared three new Epistles on History, addressed to Mr. Gibbon by Mr. Hayley. They are good poems, I believe, weight and measure, but except some handsome new similes, have little poetry and less spirit. In short, they are written by Judgment, who has set up for herself, forgetting that her business is to correct verses, and not to write them. Mr. Gibbon, I doubt, will not be quite pleased; for as the 'Epistles' have certainly cost the author some pains, they were probably commenced before the Historian's conversion to the Court, and are a little too fond of liberty to charm the ear of a convert, which too the author wants to make him in another sense, and that will not please, unless he has swallowed his Majesty's professions as well as his pay.

In another new publication, called 'Antiquities and Scenery in the North of Scotland,' I have found two remarkable passages, which intimate doubts of the antiquity of Ossian, though the author is a minister in Banff. The first, in p. 77, says, "if only like a morning dream the visions of Ossian came in later days." The other humbly begs to know, p. 81, how Fingal became possessed of burnished armour, when the times knew not the use of steel and iron.

My *quondam* friend, George Montagu,[1] has left your friend Frederic five hundred pounds a year. I am very glad of it.

[1] See vol. v., p. 262.—CUNNINGHAM.

had parts, and infinite vivacity and originality till of late years; and it grieved me much that he had changed towards me, after a friendship of between thirty and forty years.[1]

I am told that a nephew of the Provost of King's has preached and printed a most flaming sermon, which condemns the whole Opposition to the stake. Pray who is it, and on what occasion? Mr. Bryant has published an answer to Dr. Priestley.[2] I bought it, but though I have a great value for the author, the subject is so metaphysical, and so above human decision, I soon laid it aside. I hope you can send me a good account of yourself, though the spring is so unfavourable.

1917. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, May 13, 1780.

My letters keep touch with the pulse of the times: they are redoubled, or intermitted, or periodic, according as the political inflammation increases, abates, or gives place to the common course of things. Of late I have been silent, because the daily papers told you the ordinary events, and that nothing singular had happened. The Ministerial recovery is confirmed; the rejection of the Contractors' Bill by the House of Lords occasioned no ferment, and in the country the Associations seem at least to doze. The Opposition are not very unanimous, and their leaders have no grounds for reproaching the Ministers with want of conduct. The session, I conjecture, will end sooner than is expected, from general weariness. The public is tired of attending to their debates; and the chiefs will be sick of disappointments; especially when not consoled by the thorough-bass of attention and applause without doors. In short, it is my opinion that the vigour of this country is worn out, and is not likely to revive. I think it is pretty much the same case with Europe. I remember that, some years ago, I used to tell you that this is *an age of abortions*. May not this be founded on a still more

[1] To this Cole replies:—"I well remember Mr. George Montagu, was acquainted with him a little, and either called upon him in Craven or Norfolk Street, or found him at the present Lord Dacre's, for I shall scarce ever forget one of his vivacities at that time. When Mr. Gray was with me at Bletchley for a week or fortnight, he left me to go to him in Northamptonshire; I think he met you at Horton when I accompanied you to Burleigh."—Cunningham.

[2] 'An Address to Dr. Priestley, upon his Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated.'—Wright.

general truth? May not our globe be arrived at senility? Its youth animated Asia, and displayed there its parts and invention. Europe profited of the maturity of its judgment and good sense, and experience and observation. Africa never partook of the illumination of the two continents but in Egypt, and at Carthage for a moment. America has begun to announce itself for a successor to old Europe, but I already doubt whether it will replace its predecessors; genius does not seem to make great shoots there. Buffon says, that European animals degenerate across the Atlantic; perhaps its migrating inhabitants may be in the same predicament. If my reveries are true, what pity that the world will not retire into itself and enjoy a calm old age!

I could carry my speculations on the general decay still further. Is not the universal inactivity of all religions a symptom of decrepitude? The aged are seldom converted; they die in the faith they are used to: still seldomer do the ancients invent new systems. The good ladies Mahometanism, Popery, and Protestantism adhere to their old rites, but hobble after no new teachers.

You perceive, by this rhapsody, that I have nothing new to tell you, and therefore I shall adjourn the conclusion of my letter to next week. May not one hope, from the lethargy of the war, that all sides may be sinking into a disposition towards peace? It is a consummation devoutly to be wished!

18*th.*

I might as well have sent away my letter last week, for it has not increased by allowing it time to grow. The eye of expectation is fixed on Charleston, whence nothing is yet come. There are rumours of an attempt to be made by the French and Spaniards on your neighbour, Minorca; the latter having no hopes of taking Gibraltar. The languor of the war makes one expect both sides will be weary of it; at least, I flatter myself we shall pass a more tranquil summer at home than the last.

19*th.*

Sir Charles Hardy is dead, suddenly, at Portsmouth. I trust it is a good omen: it cannot be a bad one.[1]

P.S. I had sealed my letter, but open it again to tell you that I have this instant received your long despatch about Mr. Windham and Mr. Bagnal, and am very sorry so well laid a plan had no

[1] On the death of Sir Charles Hardy, Admiral Geary was called upon to take the chief command.—WALPOLE.

of them would be shot, and some of them, for their incendiary leaders would desert them, would be hanged. Oh! my dear Sir, I can never approve of scenes so likely to produce such consequences! I am not so convinced of the infallibility of my principles, of any modes of religion or government, as to risk the blood of a single being. Could I establish my system, whatever it were, should I be able to restore the lives lost in pursuit of my doctrines? Has Heaven authorised me to make this man happy at the expense of another man's life? No, no, nor will I ever let you, who are all virtue and humanity, be less tender than I am, who am not a quarter so good.

As to this country, it is sunk perhaps never to rise again; but that is a theme would carry me into a volume. All may be reduced to two heads; the nation is *insensible*, and though we have parts we have no wisdom. Orators we have I believe superior to the most boasted of antiquity, but we have no politicians. Can either the Court or the Opposition boast of a single man who is fit to govern a whole country, much less to restore one? The nation itself is of my opinion: to whom does it look, up or down? From that essential defect everything the Ministers attempt miscarries; and the Opposition is split into little factions. It is my opinion that Europe itself is worn out. Has one great general or admiral risen out of this extensive war?

The story of Sir W. Chambers is odd. He is certainly in Flanders, but there is no embezzlement; he has money in his bankers' hands, writes to his family, and sends orders to his workmen at Somerset House. In short, it is a mystery, which time, which establishes truth, but much oftener falsehood, must settle. Adieu!

1920. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 28, 1780.

THERE has been such an uncommon event that I must give you an account of it, as it relates to the Republic of poetry, of which you are President, and to the Aristocracy of Noble Authors, to whom I am Gentleman Usher.[1] Lady Craven's Comedy, called 'The Miniature Picture,' which she acted herself with a genteel set at her own house in the country, has been played at Drury Lane. The chief singularity was that she went to it herself the second night, in form; sat

[1] Compare vol. i., p. li., and vol. iii., p. 276.—CUNNINGHAM.

in the middle of the front row of the stage-box, much dressed, with a profusion of white bugles and plumes to receive the public homage due to her sex and loveliness. The Duchess of Richmond, Lady Harcourt, Lady Edgecumbe, Lady Aylesbury, Mrs. Damer, Lord Craven, General Conway, Colonel O'Hara, Mr. Lenox and I were with her. It was amazing to see so young a woman entirely possess herself; but there is such an integrity and frankness in her consciousness of her own beauty and talents, that she speaks of them with a *naïveté* as if she had no property in them, but only wore them as gifts of the Gods. Lord Craven, on the contrary, was quite agitated by his fondness for her and with impatience at the bad performance of the actors, which was wretched indeed, yet the address of the plot, which is the chief merit of the piece, and some lively pencilling, carried it off very well, though Parsons murdered the Scotch Lord, and Mrs. Robinson (who is supposed to be the favourite of the Prince of Wales) thought on nothing but her own charms or him. There is a very good though endless Prologue written by Sheridan and spoken in perfection by King, which was encored (an entire novelty) the first night; and an Epilogue that I liked still better, and which was full as well delivered by Mrs. Abington, written by Mr. Jekyll.

The audience, though very civil, missed a fair opportunity of being gallant; for in one of those —logues, I forget which, the noble authoress was mentioned, and they did not applaud as they ought to have done exceedingly when she condescended to avow her pretty child, and was there looking so very pretty. I could not help thinking to myself how many deaths Lady Harcourt would have suffered rather than encounter such an exhibition; yet Lady Craven's tranquillity had nothing displeasing—it was only the ease that conscious pre-eminence bestows on Sovereigns, whether their empire consists in power or beauty. It was the ascendant of Millamont and Lady Betty Modish and Indamore; and it was tempered by her infinite good nature, which made her make excuses for the actors instead of being provoked at them. I have brought hither her portrait[1] and placed it in the favourite Blue Room, and so I have the delightful picture of Charles II. and Rose his gardener, but have been forced to remove two others less in my graces, for I have not an inch of room now unoccupied.

[1] An oval portrait by Romney; at the Strawberry Hill sale in 1842, it sold for 32*l.* 11*s.*—CUNNINGHAM.

Sir Joshua has begun a charming picture of my three fair nieces, the Waldegraves, and very like. They are embroidering and winding silk;[1] I rather wished to have them drawn like the Graces adorning a bust of the Duchess as the Magna Mater; but my ideas are not adopted. However, I still intend to have the Duchess [of Gloucester] and her two other children as Latona, for myself.

There has been a bloody scramble in the West Indies, which the extraordinary Gazette has created a victory. Some of Rodney's Captains have behaved ill; it is lucky that when our officers do not choose to fight, the French should choose to run away. Admiral Barrington, when he refused the command on Hardy's death, asked where our fleet was, and our seamen and our discipline!

Lord Sandwich is resuscitating Sir Hugh Palliser; he toasted him at the dinner of the Trinity House, &c. Mr. Courtney refused to drink it. Palliser has since been at Court.

I shall tell you a *bon-mot* of Soame Jenyns, who, by the way, has been half killed at the nomination of Members for Cambridgeshire, and then reserve the rest of my paper till I go to town. Seeing some members pairing off in the Speaker's Chamber, he said, "I think there are no happy pairs now in England, but those who pair here."

Sir W. Chambers has reappeared, and been at the Royal Academy. His absence is now said to have been an *equipée* of gallantry. One would think you or I cared extremely about Sir William when he makes so many paragraphs in my letters; but I hate to write lies and had rather be tiresome than false.

31*st.*

I have been in town for the birthday of the little Princess of our little Court, but heard no news, so am in no hurry to send away my letter. The Chancellor [Thurlow] has been dying, and thinks himself that he shall not be able to keep the Seals, though the physicians do not despair of him. I was told that the conclusion of Rodney's letter had these words: "It was the most melancholy day for England I

[1] This very fine picture is still at Strawberry Hill. It is lucky that Sir Joshua did not adopt Walpole's idea, or we should have had something as stiff and formal as the Blessington picture, by the same hand, of the three daughters of Sir William Montgomery, as 'The Graces decorating a terminal figure of Hymen,' now in the National Gallery. The table at which they are at work is also at Strawberry Hill, and in the picture is painted with the fidelity of a Pre-Raphaelite. The table, however, was the work of an assistant. See Letter to Mason, 10th Feb. 1783. "Sir Joshua gets avaricious in his old age," Walpole remarked to Pinkerton. "My picture of the young ladies Waldegrave is doubtless very fine and graceful, but it cost me 800 guineas." *Walpoliana*, p. 159.—CUNNINGHAM.

ever saw." That was a bold assertion. There is a notion that Admiral Parker and his division Pallisered Rodney, but *Iliacos intra Muros et extra.*

There is just published a Dialogue of Rousseau, the title of which is 'Rousseau Juge Jean Jacques.' There are fine strokes of eloquence, you may be certain, and much address in the management of the argument, which is to confute the charges of his enemies; but the groundwork is his old frenzy, composed of vanity and suspicions. He asserts that there is a universal plot against him, composed of the philosophes, clergy, his own friends and everybody else, headed by the French Government, and supported at great expense; and that the whole world is sworn to keep a profound secret from him all that is said against him, though by somebody's perjury he knows it all, and moreover the plot is proved by one of the Interlocutors of the Dialogue allowing it to be true. Lord Harcourt himself allows it is a very odd book and certainly Rousseau's, and yet I think is sorry it is.

If the clergy, and *philosophes*, and French Administration can all unite in any one point, there is a little more art in France than in England.

June 2.

I have this minute received your letter, but cannot satisfy your curiosity. I know, nor shall know more of Rodney's story or Mr. Strutt's than I, and consequently you, can see in the papers. I have done with London for this season, and have no correspondent there, and shall seldom visit it. My days are drawing to a conclusion, and I wish to pass them with as little pain as I can and with as little vexation, consequently politics can but disturb them. You tell me that of two extreme evils, one must.[1] I own that is not my opinion. I think we shall dwindle into an insignificant single island, and in which stupidity may at last settle into despotism; but I think there is not only not spirit, but not sense enough anywhere to bring the contest to an immediate decision; and since we have neither wisdom nor virtue left, I hope not, for I am convinced that only the few good men amongst us would be the victims. I shall go to Malvern in July for a month or six weeks, and visit Nuneham in autumn if I am well enough. Adieu.[2]

[1] A word is here torn out from the MS., with a broken seal.—MITFORD.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 31, 1780.

A THOUSAND thanks for the charming Druid mug which I received yesterday, and

1921. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, May 30, 1780.

At last I have got from Bonus my altar-doors which I bought at Mr. Ives's; he has repaired them admirably. I would not suffer him to repaint or varnish them. Three are indubitably Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, Cardinal Beaufort, and Archbishop Kemp. The fourth I cannot make out. It is a man in a crimson garment lined with white, and not tonsured. He is in the stable with cattle, and has the air of Joseph; but over his head hangs a large shield with these arms: * * * *[1] The Cornish choughs are sable on or; the other three divisions are gules, on the first of which is a gold crescent.

The second arms have three bulls' heads sable, horned or. The chevron was so changed that Bonus thought it sable; but I think it was gules, and then it would be Bullen or Boleyn. Lord de Ferrars says, the first are the arms of Sir Bartholomew Tate, who he finds married a Sanders. Edmondson's new 'Dictionary of Heraldry' confirms both arms for Tate and Sanders, except that Sanders bore the chevron ermine, which it may have been. But what I wish to discover is, whether Sir Bartholomew Tate was a benefactor to

the long and excellent letter which accompanied it. I have to thank you also for another letter by the post, in which, though you think my political scheme tends to inhumanity, I heartily forgive you; yet, depend upon it, matters are now growing so near a crisis, that (whatever may be either your or my opinions) despotism or a struggle against it, and a warm one too, will be to be expected. Tame submission will indeed spare present bloodshed, but you can make the inference without my assistance.

I have neither seen 'Royal Reflections,' nor Garrick's 'Life,' nor the 'Ode,' which, without telling me its name, you ascribe to Soame Jenyns. Were it certainly his, perhaps it would be worth a few strictures. I shall look for it in the booksellers' shops at York, whither I am immediately going in my way into the North Riding, where I shall make a few visits, and return hither the beginning of July; but pray continue your directions hither, as my curate will know how to forward all letters to me by the very same post that brings them. I shall be curious to know, how Lord John Cavendish votes on Strutt's bill for increasing parliamentary qualifications. He ought on his own principles to vote for it, and yet the papers tell me it is brought in to disqualify Charles Fox, Burke, &c., from sitting in the next Parliament. I hope soon to have an interesting letter from you on Rodney's disobedient captains. I trust they are all Lord Sandwich's dearest friends.

Accounts from Charleston, too, I think, must come either (good or bad, bad or good); shuffle the words and then cut them, and choose which you please for trumps. Adieu. W. Mason.

[1] Here Mr. Walpole had sketched in a rough draught of the arms.—Wright.

St. Edmondsbury, whence these doors came, or was in any shape a retainer to the Duke of Gloucester or Cardinal Beaufort. The Duke's and Sir Bartholomew's figures were on the insides of the doors (which I have sawed into four panels), and are painted in a far superior style to the Cardinal and the Archbishop, which are very hard and dry. The two others are so good that they are in the style of the school of the Caracci. They at least were painted by some Italian; the draperies have large and bold folds, and one wonders how they could be executed in the reign of Henry VI. I shall be very glad if you can help me to any lights, at least about Sir Bartholomew. I intend to place them in my Chapel, as they will aptly accompany the shrine. The Duke's and Archbishop's agree perfectly with their portraits in my 'Marriage of Henry VI.,' and prove how rightly I guessed. The Cardinal's is rather a longer and thinner visage, but that he might have in the latter end of life; and in the 'Marriage' he has the red bonnet on, which shortens his face. On the door he is represented in the character he ought to have possessed, a pious, contrite look, not the truer resemblance which Shakspeare drew—"He dies, and makes no sign!"—But Annibal Caracci himself could not paint like our Raphael poet! Pray don't venture yourself in any more electioneering riots: you see the mob do not respect poets, nor, I suppose, antiquaries.

P.S. I am in no haste for an answer to my queries.

1922. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 1, 1780.

I THINK it my duty to give your Ladyship a faithful account of Lady Warwick and her sisters, from an eye-witness who did not know it would be transmitted to you. Mr. Cowslade is returned from Warwick Castle, and I questioned him minutely. He thinks the Countess will recover, but it will be long and slow. He saw her but twice, and that as she was airing, for the least thing disorders her nerves. Miss Vernon is better, and he thinks, though very delicate, in no consumption. He commends both her and Miss Elizabeth extremely, and says he never saw more proper modest behaviour, and that both are very reserved.

This is all I really have to say, Madam. Nay, though so proud of the honour of being your Ladyship's gazetteer, I foresee I shall

be obliged to resign my office, for a reason that the present Ministers will think a very bad one—my being totally unfit for my place. It is too hard on a poor writer of an Evening Post, to be forced to labour in his vocation only in summer. Mr. Bates had rather lie than speak truth; and for fear he should even be suspected of veracity, he has chosen the Duke of Richmond for the hero of his abuse—but I, who have no invention, and confine myself to matters of fact, cannot relate what never happened. Campaigns are out of my depth. I neither understand Lord Amherst, nor what he ought to understand—the army. I do not know a first rate from a tenth; nay, nor how many rates there are, nor how small a large ship may be. I cannot expound a Gazette after all the pains in the world have been taken to make it unintelligible; and as our whole war consists in confounding the truth, I am not qualified to register King Mars's or Earl Neptune's campaigns. Since poor Lady Blandford's death I shall have no opportunity of meeting Lady Greenwich and hearing her break her bulk of scandal. There is not so untittletattling a village as Twickenham[1] in the island; and if Mr. Cambridge did not gallop the roads for intelligence, I believe the grass would grow in our ears.

I have some other employments that I could wish to resign too; more exalted, though not so flattering; but having no salaries annexed to them, I should gain no patriot credit by giving them up. Nobody ever felt the slavery of Court attendance more than I did on Monday. The country was gushing with verdure and beauty, the day was sultry, and Strawberry as cool as a grotto—yet I was forced to go to town to a birthday and a ball!

> Oh! 'tis the sweetest of all earthly things
> To live with Princes and to talk of Kings!
> Then happy man who shows the tombs! said I.[2]

The last line was certainly written for me, who love Westminster Abbey much more than levées and circles—and no treason, I hope—fond enough of kings as soon as they have a canopy of *stone* over them.

On Tuesday I was asked to a conversation-piece at Lady Clermont's, and there I found that Thalestris, the Princess Daskiou, and her son and daughter. The lad is a tolerable Pompey; the daughter

[1] Surely the village of Pope and Walpole was a tittletattling village from 1717, when Pope went to reside there, till 1797, when Walpole died.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] *Pope*, after *Donne*. Walpole was fond of this quotation.—CUNNINGHAM.

a perfect Tartar. The mother, who I hoped had forgotten me, recollected our having passed an evening together at Northumberland House, as she told Lady Clermont; but as she did not claim me, I shall not leave my name at her lodgings in blood-bowl alley.

Your Ireland, I find, has spoken out, though professing much decorum. The Chancellor is for firmness; as if frowns would pass more current in Ireland than in America. The heir-apparent of the Seals, out of contradiction both to the Chancellor and to his own treatment of Dr. Franklin, takes the side of acquiescence; and probably will prevail, for Lord Thurlow is in so bad a way that if he lives he is not likely to be able to execute his office.

Yesterday's papers say the Church of England is to assemble to-morrow in St. George's Fields, and to follow their metropolitan, Lord George Gordon, to the House of Commons, to demand that the defender of the faith should be forced to part with his whore of Babylon; so his triple crown is in as much peril as his other diadems! but your Ladyship can read the papers as well as I, and when I recur to them you must yourself be weary of a—

Mercurius Rusticus.

1923. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, June 3, 1780.

I KNOW that a governor or a gazetteer ought not to desert their posts, if a town is besieged, or a town is full of news; and therefore, Madam, I resume my office. I smile to-day—but I trembled last night; for an hour or more I never felt more anxiety. I knew the bravest of my friends were barricaded into the House of Commons, and every avenue to it impossible. Till I heard the Horse and Foot Guards were gone to their rescue, I expected nothing but some dire misfortune; and the first thing I heard this morning was that part of the town had had a fortunate escape from being burnt after ten last night. You must not expect order, Madam; I must recollect circumstances as they occur; and the best idea I can give your Ladyship of the tumult will be to relate it as I heard it.

I had come to town in the morning on a private occasion, and found it so much as I left it, that though I saw a few blue cockades here and there, I only took them for new recruits. Nobody came in; between seven and eight I saw a hack and another coach arrive at Lord Shelburne's, and thence concluded that Lord George

Gordon's trumpet had brayed to no purpose. At eight I went to Gloucester House; the Duchess told me, there had been a riot, and that Lord Mansfield's glasses had been broken, and a bishop's, but, that most of the populace were dispersed. About nine his Royal Highness and Colonel Heywood arrived; and then we heard a much more alarming account. The concourse had been incredible, and had by no means obeyed the injunctions of their apostle, or rather had interpreted the spirit instead of the letter. The Duke had reached the House with the utmost difficulty, and found it sunk from the temple of dignity to an asylum of lamentable objects. There were the Lords Hillsborough, Stormont, Townshend, without their bags, and with their hair dishevelled about their ears, and Lord Willoughby without his periwig, and Lord Mansfield, whose glasses had been broken, quivering on the woolsack like an aspen. Lord Ashburnham had been torn out of his chariot, the Bishop of Lincoln ill-treated, the Duke of Northumberland had lost his watch in the holy hurly-burly, and Mr. Mackenzie his snuff-box and spectacles. Alarm came that the mob had thrown down Lord Boston, and were trampling him to death; which they almost did. They had diswigged Lord Bathurst on his answering them stoutly, and told him he was the pope, and an old woman; thus splitting Pope Joan into two. Lord Hillsborough, on being taxed with negligence, affirmed that the Cabinet had the day before empowered Lord North to take precautions; but two Justices that were called denied having received any orders. Colonel Heywood, a very stout man, and luckily a very cool one, told me he had thrice been collared as he went by the Duke's order to inquire what was doing in the other House; but though he was not suffered to pass he reasoned the mob into releasing him,—yet, he said, he never saw so serious an appearance and such determined countenances.

About eight the Lords adjourned, and were suffered to go home; though the rioters declared that if the other House did not repeal the Bill, there would at night be terrible mischief. Mr. Burke's name had been given out as the object of resentment. General Conway I knew would be intrepid and not give way; nor did he, but inspired the other House with his own resolution. Lord George Gordon was running backwards and forwards, from the windows of the Speaker's Chamber denouncing all that spoke against him to the mob in the lobby. Mr. Conway tasked him severely both in the House and aside, and Colonel Murray told him he was a disgrace to his family. Still the members were besieged and locked up for four hours, nor could

divide, as the lobby was crammed. Mr. Conway and Lord Frederick Cavendish, with whom I supped afterwards, told me there was a moment when they thought they must have opened the doors and fought their way out sword in hand. Lord North was very firm, and at last they got the Guards and cleared the pass.

Blue banners had been waved from tops of houses at Whitehall as signals to the people, while the coaches passed, whom they should applaud or abuse. Sir George Savile's and Charles Turner's coaches were demolished. Ellis, whom they took for a Popish gentleman, they carried prisoner to the Guildhall in Westminster, and he escaped by a ladder out of a window. Lord Mahon harangued the people from the balcony of a coffee-house and begged them to retire; but at past ten a new scene opened. The mob forced the Sardinian Minister's Chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and gutted it. He saved nothing but two chalices; lost the silver lamps, &c., and the benches being tossed into the street, were food for a bonfire, with the blazing brands of which they set fire to the inside of the chapel, nor, till the Guards arrived, would suffer the engines to play. My cousin, T. Walpole, fetched poor Madam Cordon, who was ill, and guarded her in his house till three in the morning, when all was quiet.

Old Haslang's Chapel[1] has undergone the same fate, all except the ordeal. They found stores of mass-books and run tea.

This is a slight and hasty sketch, Madam. On Tuesday the House of Commons is to consider the Popish laws. I forgot to tell you that the Bishops not daring to appear, the Winchester Bill, which had passed the Commons, was thrown out.

No saint was ever more diabolic than Lord George Gordon. Eleven wretches are in prison for the outrage at Cordon's, and will be hanged instead of their arch-incendiary. One person seized is a Russian officer, who had the impudence to claim acquaintance with the Sardinian Minister, and desired to be released. Cordon replied, "*Oui, Monsieur, je vous connoissois, mais je ne vous connois plus.*" I do not know whether he is an associate of Thalestris, who seems to have snuffed a revolution in the wind.

I hear there are hopes of some temperament in Ireland. Somebody, I forget who, has observed that the English Government pretends not to *quarter* soldiers in Ireland, and therefore must be glad of a bill. It is time some of our wounds should close; or, I believe, I shall soon have too much employment, instead of wanting materials for letters.

[1] In Golden Square. See note at p. 381.—Cunningham.

1924. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, June 4, 1780.

I WENT to town on Friday for a private supper, to which I was engaged. There I found your letter, finished mine and put it into the post, and went out; and it was past eight at night before I heard a syllable of the prodigious tumult at Westminster. All yesterday I had not a minute's time to write you a line, so you will have seen all the particulars in the common papers. Miraculously no lives were lost, nor was part of the town burnt, as it was near being, for the mob not only set on fire the Sardinian Minister's Chapel, but, till the Guards arrived, would not suffer the engines to play on it.

Nothing ever surpassed the abominable behaviour of the ruffian apostle that preached up this storm. I always, you know well, disliked and condemned the repeal of the Popish statutes, and am stedfast in that opinion; but I abhor such Protestantism as breathes the soul of Popery, and commences a reformation by attempting a massacre. The frantic incendiary ran backwards and forwards, naming names for slaughter to the mob: fortunately his disciples were not expert at assassination, and nobody was murdered for the Gospel's sake. So blind was his zeal, and so ill tutored his outlaws, that though the petition was addressed and carried to the House of Commons, the chief fury fell on the Peers, and on some of the most inoffensive, as Lord Willoughby and Lord Boston, the latter of whom was thrown down and trampled on, and had a most narrow escape.

The demolition of two Chapels of Foreign Ministers, which they enjoy by the law of nations, and did enjoy before the repeal, is another savage outrage, and I suppose will throw the King of Sardinia into the general league against us. One may hope, I trust, that the universal detestation which the Gordon has drawn on himself, will disarm his further power of mischief, though a statute of lunacy ought to be his doom. Colonel Murray, uncle of the Duke of Athol, said to him in the House of Commons, "I see many lives will be lost, but, by God, yours shall be one of them!" Some of the coolest of the members have told me that there was one moment in which they thought they should be forced to open the doors of the House and fight their way out, sword in hand, as their only chance of safety.

The wretch had marked the Duke of Richmond to the populace for sacrifice, and they called for him, but the greater part, not knowing on what view, echoed the sound, and called for *the noble Duke of Richmond.* Lord Mahon counteracted the incendiary, and chiefly contributed by his harangues to conjure down the tempest.

What steps are to be taken I do not know—what preventive measures were taken are to be summed up thus: the Cabinet Council, on Thursday, authorised Lord North to prepare the civil officers to keep the peace, and *he forgot it* till two o'clock at noon, some hours after the procession had begun to march.

Well, here is a Religious War added to all our Civil and Foreign Wars, enough surely to gorge Bellona herself, and to throw open the most promising field to France. If these evils could be enhanced, they would be by the confusion of jarring interests and opinions, that cross one another in every possible direction. The Duke of Richmond, who you and I lament is for toleration of Popery, will please *you* by having yesterday offered a Bill for annual Parliaments, and is gone out of town to-day, disgusted at its being rejected. Yet, though I differ with him on both points, I worship his thousand virtues beyond any man's: he is intrepid and tender, inflexible and humane beyond example. I do not know which is most amiable, his heart or his conscience. He ought too to be the great model to all our factions. No difference in sentiments between him and his friends makes the slightest impression on his attachment to them; but, like many models, he will not be imitated.

I recommend his example a little to you yourself, my good Sir; because the only little good I can hope to do while I remain here, is to conciliate my friends, whose great outlines are the same, though the folds of their garments may flow in different styles. You seem too much estranged from Lord John. I have often disagreed with him, but always honoured his integrity: surely that is the fountain of principles; whatever has grown on his margin, the source has remained limpid and undefiled.

You despise my weariness and palsied chill of age, but I take nothing ill of a friend. I stand on the threshold of both worlds, and look back and forwards for this poor country with fond eyes, and think that nothing can redeem it, even in part, but sober and well-poised virtue. Violence, unsupported by general national union, will, like Lord Gordon's frenzy, but precipitate destruction, and in its progress be embued with every act of injustice. That lunatic, whom I should less severely condemn, if I saw nothing in

him but lunacy, is horridly black in my eyes, for you know it is my most conscientious opinion that no man has a right to expose any life but his own on any disputable tenet in religion or government, still less on suspicions or jealousies. But I wander, from indignation against him, and will finish lest I dissert, instead of amusing you with news. In vain I try to steep my senses in oblivion, and to lull the remaining hours. Such shocks as Friday's agitate all my sensibility. Jesus! if the Duke of Richmond had fallen a victim to a blind tumult, in which half the sacrificers devoted him to the Furies, while half adored him.

1925. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1780.

Not a syllable yet from General Clinton. There has been a battle at sea in the West Indies, which we might have gained; know we did not, but not why: and all this is forgotten already in a fresher event. I have said for some time that the field is so extensive, and the occurrences so numerous, and so much pains are taken to involve them in falsehoods and mystery, and opinions are so divided, that all evidences will be dead before a single part can be cleared up; but I have not time, nor you patience, for my reflections. I must hurry to the history of the day. The Jack of Leyden of the age, Lord George Gordon, gave notice to the House of Commons last week, that he would, on Friday, bring in the petition of the Protestant Association; and he openly declared to his disciples, that he would not carry it unless *a noble army of martyrs, not fewer than forty thousand,* would accompany him. Forty thousand, led by such a lamb, were more likely to prove butchers than victims; and so, in good truth, they were very near being. Have you faith enough in me to believe that the sole precaution taken was, that the Cabinet Council on Thursday empowered the First Lord of the Treasury to give proper orders to the civil magistrates to keep the peace,—and his Lordship forgot it!

Early on Friday morning the conservators of the Church of England assembled in *St. George's* Fields to encounter the dragon, the old serpent, and marched in lines of six and six—about thirteen thousand only, as they were computed—with a petition as long as the procession, which the apostle himself presented; but, though he had given out most Christian injunctions for peaceable behaviour, he

did everything in his power to promote a massacre. He demanded immediate repeal of toleration, told Lord North he could have him torn to pieces, and, running every minute to the door or windows, bawled to the populace that Lord North would give them no redress, and that now this member, now that, was speaking against them.

In the mean time, the Peers, going to their own Chamber, and as yet not concerned in the petition, were assaulted; many of their glasses were broken, and many of their persons torn out of the carriages. Lord Boston was thrown down and almost trampled to death; and the two Secretaries of State, the Master of the Ordnance, and Lord Willoughby were stripped of their bags or wigs, and the three first came into the House with their hair all dishevelled. The chariots of Sir George Savile and Charles Turner, two leading advocates for the late toleration, though in Opposition, were demolished; and the Duke of Richmond and Burke were denounced to the mob as proper objects for sacrifice. Lord Mahon laboured to pacify the tempest, and towards eight and nine, prevailed on so many to disperse, that the Lords rose and departed in quiet; but every avenue to the other House was besieged and blockaded, and for four hours they kept their doors locked, though some of the warmest members proposed to sally out, sword in hand, and cut their way. Lord North and that House behaved with great firmness, and would not submit to give any other satisfaction to the rioters, than to consent to take the Popish laws into consideration on the following Tuesday; and, calling the Justices of the Peace, empowered them to call out the whole force of the country to quell the riot.

The magistrates soon brought the Horse and Foot Guards, and the pious ragamuffins soon fled; so little enthusiasm fortunately had inspired them; at least all their religion consisted in outrage and plunder; for the Duke of Northumberland, General Grant, Mr. Mackinsy, and others, had their pockets picked of their watches and snuff-boxes. Happily, not a single life was lost.

This tumult, which was over between nine and ten at night, had scarce ceased before it broke out in two other quarters. Old Haslang's[1] Chapel was broken open and plundered; and, as he is a Prince of Smugglers as well as Bavarian Minister, great quantities of run tea and contraband goods were found in his house. This one cannot lament; and still less, as the old wretch has for these forty

[1] Count Haslang, Minister from the Elector of Bavaria: he had been here from the year 1740.—WALPOLE. He died in May, 1783, at the age of eighty-three, after an embassy of forty-four years.—WRIGHT.

years usurped a hired house, and, though the proprietor for many years has offered to remit his arrears of rent, he will neither quit the house nor pay for it.

Monsieur Cordon, the Sardinian Minister, suffered still more. The mob forced his chapel, stole two silver lamps, demolished everything else, threw the benches into the street, set them on fire, carried the brands into the chapel, and set fire to that; and, when the engines came, would not suffer them to play till the Guards arrived, and saved the house and probably all that part of the town. Poor Madame Cordon was confined by illness. My cousin, Thomas Walpole, who lives in Lincoln's Inn Fields, went to her rescue, and dragged her, for she could scarce stand with terror and weakness, to his own house.

I doubt this narrative will not re-approach you and Mr. Windham. I have received yours of the 20th of last month.

You will be indignant that such a mad dog as Lord George should not be knocked on the head. Colonel Murray did tell him in the House, that, if any lives were lost, his Lordship should join the number. Nor yet is he so lunatic as to deserve pity. Besides being very debauched, he has more knavery than mission. What will be decided on him, I do not know; every man that heard him can convict him of the worst kind of sedition: but it is dangerous to constitute a rascal a martyr. I trust we have not much holy fury left; I am persuaded that there was far more dissoluteness than enthusiasm in the mob: yet the episode is very disagreeable. I came from town yesterday to avoid the birthday [June 4]. We have a report here that the Papists last night burnt a Presbyterian meeting-house, but I credit nothing now on the first report. It was said to be intended on Saturday, and the Guards patrolled the streets at night; but it is very likely that Saint George Gordon spread the insinuation himself.

My letter cannot set out before to-morrow; therefore I will postpone the conclusion. In the mean time I must scold you very seriously for the cameo you have sent me by Mr. Morrice. This house is full of your presents and of my blushes. I love any one of them as an earnest of your friendship; but I hate so many. You force upon me an air most contrary to my disposition. I cannot thank you for your kindness; I entreated you to send me nothing more. You leave me no alternative but to seem interested or ungrateful. I can only check your generosity by being brutal. If I had a grain of power, I would affront you and call your presents bribes. I never gave you anything but a coffee-pot. If I could buy

a diamond as big as the Caligula, and a less would not be so valuable, I would send it you. In one word, I will not accept the cameo, unless you give me a promise under your hand that it shall be the last present you send me. I cannot stir about this house without your gifts staring me in the face. Do you think I have no conscience? I am sorry Mr. Morrice is no better, and wonder at his return. What can invite him to this country? Home never was so homely.

6th.

It is not true that a meeting-house has been burnt. I believe a Popish chapel in the city has been attacked: and they talk here of some disturbance yesterday, which is probable; for, when grace, robbery, and mischief make an alliance, they do not like to give over:—but ten miles from the spot are a thousand from truth. My letter must go to town before night, or would be too late for the post. If you do not hear from me again immediately, you will be sure that this *bourrasque* has subsided.

Thursday, 8th.

I am exceedingly vexed. I sent this letter to Berkeley Square on Tuesday, but by the present confusions my servant did not receive it in time. I came myself yesterday, and found a horrible scene. Lord Mansfield's house was just burnt down, and at night there were shocking disorders. London and Southwark were on fire in six places; but the regular troops quelled the sedition by daybreak, and everything now is quiet. A camp of ten thousand men is formed in Hyde Park, and regiments of horse and foot arrive every hour.

Friday morn, 9th.

All has been quiet to-night. I am going to Strawberry for a little rest. Your nephew told me last night that he sends you constant journals just now.

1926. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 6, 1780.

You will think me amazingly callous to politics, Madam, when you see my date is from the country. In truth I came hither on Sunday to avoid the birth-day; and stay, because Mr. Hindley's house is again to be sold by auction in half an hour; and, if one ever is to have a tranquil moment again, it is very important to know who is to be my Ucalegon, and live at next door. I write a few lines, because I have this instant received two letters at once from your Ladyship, and must thank you for the old protest which

has contracted the hue of a MS., and to answer a few of your questions, or to tell you that I am not qualified to satisfy them.

I know no more of Saint George Gordon, but that I would change his last name into Cordon, and baptise him with a halter. We have reports here of some continuance of riots, but of late I credit nothing till after two or three rebounds. All I gleaned more of the tumult on Friday was, that the Archbishop of York, who was above stairs, in a Committee, hearing of Lord Mansfield's danger, flew down, rushed through the crowd, and carried off his friend in Abraham's bosom. The Duke of Richmond told me this with great approbation. A Mr. Holroyd, a member,[1] told the Gordon that he ought to be sent to Bedlam, but that he himself would not quit him a moment, sat by him, followed him up into the gallery, and, in short, prevented his further addresses to the mob.

You ask about Mr. Selwyn: have you heard his incomparable reply to Lord George Gordon, who asked him if he would choose him again for Luggershall? He replied, "His constituents would not." "Oh, yes; if you would recommend me, they would choose me if I came from the coast of Africa." "That is according to what part of the coast you came from: they would certainly, if you came from the Guinea Coast." Now, Madam, is not this true inspiration as well as true wit? Had one asked him in which of the four quarters of the world Guinea is situated, could he have told?

I knew nothing of my nephew Cholmondeley's lending or dismissing his incumbrances. I shall rejoice in both. I do not allow that there was anything execrable in the play but the actors. I was charmed with both prologue and epilogue, and with the delivery of both. I have read neither, but liked the latter full as well as the former. I may change my opinion on examining them.

I do believe there is some truth in Miss K.'s story. I know no more of the haggle between Lady J. and your cousin Duke, nor a syllable of her daughter, not even who the baronet is. In fact, I do not look at all after the next generation and their valentines, except my own tribe, and they are so numerous, and there have been so many *contretemps* about them, that I abstract my attention as much as I can, and leave the private as well as the public to chance, who at least has some decision, which I see in nobody else.

We had an exceedingly pretty fire-work last night on the bank of the Thames, at that most beautiful of all spots that was Mr. Giles's, and is now one Franco's, a Jew, who gave the entertainment in

[1] Afterwards Lord Sheffield, the friend of Gibbon.—CUNNINGHAM.

honour of the day. I carried Lady Browne thither; my horses were frightened at the rockets, and we stepped out of the chaise and stood by the river till we were blighted by the east wind, and smothered by the smoke; for our *freeborn weather*, that on Monday and Friday was as hot as Lord George, is now as cold as the Duke of Devonshire.

I shall go to town to-morrow, and you see, Madam, do not decline my duty, when I have a word to say; but not having a grain of penetration, I did apprehend my summer letters would be very barren. I have been so far wise, that I never would embark in anything that made it expedient to maintain a character, which is a horrid burthen on an Englishman. I may mistake and guess wrong, and change my mind, or talk nonsense, with impunity. I shall not be thought more trifling than usual. And is not it some comfort not to be the worse for wear?

1927. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Wednesday, five o'clock, June 7, 1780.

I AM heartily glad I am come to town, though never was a less delicious place; but there was no bearing to remain philosophically in the country, and hear the thousand rumours of every hour, and not know whether one's friends and relations were not destroyed. Yesterday Newgate was burnt, and other houses, and Lord Sandwich near massacred. At Hyde Park Corner I saw Guards at the Lord President's door,[1] and in Piccadilly met George [Selwyn] and the Signorina, whom I wondered he ventured there. He came into my chaise in a fury, and told me Lord Mansfield's house is in ashes, and that five thousand men were marched to Caen Wood—it is true, and that one thousand of the Guards are gone after them. A camp of ten thousand is forming in Hyde Park as fast as possible, and the Berkshire militia is just arrived. Wedderburn and Lord Stormont are threatened, and I do not know who. The Duchess of Beaufort sent an hour ago to tell me Lord Ashburnham had just advertised her that he is threatened, and was sending away his poor bedridden Countess and children; and the Duchess begged to know what I proposed to do. I immediately went to her, and quieted her, and assured her we are as safe as we can be anywhere, and as little obnoxious; but if she was alarmed, I advised her to remove to

[1] At Apsley House.—Lord Bathurst was Lord President of the Council.—CUNNINGHAM.

Notting Hill, where Lady Mary [Coke] is absent. The Duchess said the mob were now in Saville Row; we sent thither, and so they are, round Colonel Woodford's, who gave the Guards orders to fire at Lord Mansfield's, where six at least of the rioters were killed.

The mob are now armed, having seized the stores in the Artillery Ground.

If anything can surprise your Ladyship, it will be what I am going to tell you. Lord George Gordon went to Buckingham House this morning, and asked an audience of the King. Can you be more surprised still?—He was refused.

I must finish, for I am going about the town to learn, and see, and hear. Caen Wood is saved; a regiment on march met the rioters.

It will probably be a black night: I am decking myself with blue ribbons like a May-day garland. Horsemen are riding by with muskets. I am sorry I did not bring the armour of Francis I. to town, as I am to guard a Duchess Dowager and an heiress. Will it not be romantically generous if I yield the latter to my nephew?

From my garrison in Berkeley Square.

P.S. The pious insurgents will soon have a military chest. They took forty-five guineas from Charles Turner yesterday.

1928. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Wednesday night, past two in the morning, June 7, 1780.

As it is impossible to go to bed (for Lady Betty Compton has hoped I would not this very minute, which, next to her asking the contrary, is the thing not to be refused), I cannot be better employed than in proving how much I think of your Ladyship at the most horrible moment I ever saw. You shall judge.

I was at Gloucester House between nine and ten. The servants announced a great fire; the Duchess, her daughters, and I went to the top of the house, and beheld not only one but two vast fires, which we took for the King's Bench and Lambeth; but the latter was the New Prison, and the former at least was burning at midnight. Colonel Heywood came in and acquainted his Royal Highness that nine houses in Great Queen-street had been gutted, and the furniture burnt; and he had *seen* a great Catholic distiller's at Holborn Bridge broken open and all the casks staved; and since, the house has been set on fire.

At ten I went to Lord Hertford's, and found him and his sons charging muskets. Lord Rockingham has two hundred soldiers in his house, and is determined to defend it. Thence I went to General Conway's, and in a moment a servant came in and said there was a great fire just by. We went to the street-door and thought it was St. Martin's-lane in flames, but it is either the Fleet Prison or the distiller's. I forgot that in the court of Gloucester House I met Colonel Jennings, who told me there had been an engagement at the Royal Exchange to defend the Bank, and that the Guards had shot sixty of the mob; I have since heard seventy, for I forgot to tell your Ladyship that at a *great* council, held this evening at the Queen's House, at which Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Portland were present, military execution was ordered, for, in truth, the Justices dare not act.

After supper I returned to Lady Hertford, finding Charing Cross, and the Haymarket, and Piccadilly, illuminated from fear, though all this end of the town is hitherto perfectly quiet, lines being drawn cross the Strand and Holborn, to prevent the mob coming westward. Henry and William Conway arrived, and had seen the populace break open the toll-houses on Blackfriars-bridge, and carry off bushels of halfpence, which fell about the streets, and then they set fire to the toll-houses. General Conway's porter has seen five distinct conflagrations.

Lady Hertford's cook came in, white as this paper. *He is a German Protestant.* He said his house had been attacked, his furniture burnt; that he had saved one child, and left another with his wife, whom he could not get out; and that not above ten or twelve persons had assaulted his house. I could not credit this, at least was sure it was an episode that had no connection with the general insurrection, and was at most some pique of his neighbours. I sent my own footman to the spot in Woodstock-street; he brought me word there had been eight or ten apprentices who made the riot, that two Life Guardsmen had arrived and secured four of the enemies. It seems the cook had refused to illuminate like the rest of the street. To-morrow I suppose his Majesty King George Gordon will order their release; they will be inflated with having been confessors, and turn heroes.

On coming home I visited the Duchess Dowager and my fair ward; and am heartily tired with so many expeditions, for which I little imagined I had youth enough left.

We expect three or four more regiments to-morrow, besides some

troops of horse and militia already arrived. We are menaced with counter-squadrons from the country. There will, I fear, be much blood spilt before peace is restored. The Gordon has already surpassed Masaniello, who I do not remember set his own capital on fire. Yet I assure your Ladyship there is no panic. Lady Aylesbury has been at the play in the Haymarket, and the Duke and my four nieces at Ranelagh, this evening. For my part, I think the *common* diversions of these last four-and-twenty hours are sufficient to content any moderate appetite; and as it is now three in the morning, I shall wish you good night, and try to get a little sleep myself, if Lord George Macbeth has not murdered it all. I own I shall not soon forget the sight I saw from the top of Gloucester House!

Thursday morning, after breakfast.

I do not know whether to call the horrors of the night greater or less than I thought. My printer, who has been out all night, and on the spots of action, says, not above a dozen were killed at the Royal Exchange, some few elsewhere; at the King's Bench, he does not know how many; but in other respects the calamities are dreadful. He saw many houses set on fire, women and children screaming, running out of doors with what they could save, and knocking one another down with their loads in the confusion. Barnard's Inn is burnt, and some houses, mistaken for Catholic. Kirgate says most of the rioters are apprentices, and plunder and drink have been their chief objects, and both women and men are still lying dead drunk about the streets: brandy is preferable to enthusiasm. I trust many more troops will arrive to-day. What families ruined! What wretched wives and mothers! What public disgrace!—ay! and where, and when, and how will all this confusion end! and what shall we be when it is concluded? I remember the Excise and the Gin Act, and the rebels at Derby, and Wilkes's interlude, and the French at Plymouth; or I should have a very bad memory; but I never till last night saw London and Southwark in flames!

After dinner.

It is a moment, Madam, when to be surprised is not surprising. But what will you say to the House of Commons meeting by twelve o'clock to-day, and adjourning ere fifty members were arrived, to Monday se'nnight! So adieu all government but the sword!

Will your Ladyship give me credit when I heap contradictions on absurdities—will you believe such confusion and calamities, and yet

think there is no consternation? Well, only hear. My niece, Mrs. Keppel, with her three daughters, drove since noon over Westminster-bridge, through St. George's Fields, where the King's Bench is smoking, over London-bridge, passed the Bank, and came the whole length of the City! They have been here, and say the people *look* very unquiet; but can one imagine that they would be smiling? Old Lady Albemarle, who followed me in few minutes from Gloucester House, was robbed at Mrs. Keppel's door in Pall Mall, between ten and eleven, by a horseman. Sparrow, one of the delivered convicts, who was to have been hanged this morning, is said to have been shot yesterday as he was spiriting up the rioters. Kirgate has just heard in the Park, that the Protestant Association disavow the seditious, and will take up arms against them. If we are saved, it will be so as by fire.

I shall return to my own castle to-morrow: I had not above four hours' sleep last night, and must get some rest. General Conway is enraged at the adjournment, and will go away too. Many coaches and chaises did leave London yesterday. My intelligence will not be so good nor so immediate; but you will not want correspondents. Disturbances are threatened again for to-night; and some probably will happen, but there are more troops and less alacrity in the outlaws.

1929. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, June 9, at noon, 1780.

All has been quiet to-night as far as we know in this region; but not without blood being spilt yesterday. The rioters attacked the Horse-Guards about six in Fleet Street, and, not giving them time to load, were repelled by the bayonet. Twenty fell, thirty-five were wounded and sent to the hospital, where two died directly. Three of the Guards were wounded, and a young officer named Marjoribank. Mr. Conway's footman told me he was on a message at Lord Amherst's when the Guards returned, and that their bayonets were steeped in blood.

I heard, too, at my neighbour Duchess's, whither I went at one in the morning, that the Protestant Associators, disguised with blue cockades as friends, had fallen on the rioters in St. George's Fields, and killed many. I do not warrant the truth, but I did hear often in the evening that there had been slaughter in the Borough, where

a great public-house had been destroyed, and a house at Redriffe, and another at Islington. Zeal has entirely thrown off the mask and owned its name—plunder. Its offspring have extorted money from several houses with threats of firing them as Catholic. Apprentices and Irish chairmen, and all kinds of outlaws, have been the most active. Some hundreds are actually dead about the streets, with the spirits they plundered at the distiller's; the low women knelt and sucked them as they ran from the staved casks.

It was reported last night that the primate, George Gordon, is fled to Scotland: for aught I know he may not be so far off as Grosvenor-place. All is rumour and exaggeration; and yet it would be difficult to exaggerate the horrors of Wednesday night; a town taken by storm could alone exceed them.

I am going to Strawberry this instant, exhausted with fatigue, for I have certainly been on my feet longer these last eight-and-forty hours than in forty days before. I forgot to tell your Ladyship that as I came to town I saw in chalk on a hack at Hammersmith, "*God blast the Pope*,"—now the soldiers tear away blue cockades—and, when I return next, I expect to read on the walls, "*De par le Roi, Regiment de Picardie.*"

Adieu! Madam; allow my pen a few holidays, unless the storm recommences.

1930. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 9, at night, 1780.

I HAVE not had a moment's time, or one calm enough, to write you a single line, and now am not only fatigued, but know not where to begin, or how to arrange the thousand things I have in my mind. If I am incoherent, you must excuse it, and accept whatever presents itself.

I could not bear to sit here in shameful selfish philosophy, and hear the million of reports, and know almost all I loved in danger, without sharing it. I went to town on Wednesday, and though the night was the most horrible I ever beheld, I would not take millions not to have been present; and should I have seen the conflagration as I must from these windows, I should have been distracted for my friends.

At nine at night, on notice of fire, I went with the Duchess and her daughters to the top of Gloucester House, and thence beheld

the King's Bench, which was a little town, and at a distance the New Prison in flames. At past ten I went to General Conway's: in a moment we were alarmed by the servants, and rushing to the street-door saw through Little Warwick-street such an universal blaze, that I had no doubt the Mews, at least St. Martin's-lane, was on fire. Mr. Conway ran, and I limped after him, to Charing Cross, but, though seemingly close, it was no nearer than the Fleet Market.

At past twelve I went up to Lord Hertford's: two of his sons came in from the Bridge at Blackfriars, where they had seen the toll-houses plundered and burnt. Instantly arrived their cook, a German Protestant, with a child in his arms, and all we could gather was that the mob was in possession of his house, had burnt his furniture, and had obliged him to abandon his wife and another child. I sent my own footman, for it was only in Woodstock-street, and he soon returned and said it had been only some apprentices who supposed him a Papist on his not illuminating his house, and that three of them and an Irish Catholic Chairman had been secured, but the poor man has lost his all! I drove from one place to another till two, but did not go to bed till between three and four, and ere asleep heard a troop of horse gallop by. My printer, whom I had sent out for intelligence, came not home till past nine the next morning: I feared he was killed, but then I heard of such a scene. He had beheld three sides of the Fleet Market in flames, Barnard's Inn at one end, the prison on one side and the distiller's on the other, besides Fetter and Shoe Lanes, with such horrors of distraction, distress, &c., as are not to be described; besides accounts of slaughter near the Bank. The engines were cut to pieces, and a dozen or fourteen different parts were burning. It is incredible that so few houses and buildings in comparison are in ashes. The papers must tell you other details, and of what preceded the total demolition of Lord Mansfield's, &c.

Yesterday was some slaughter in Fleet-street by the Horse-Guards, and more in St. George's Fields by the Protestant Association, who fell on the rioters, who appear to have been chiefly apprentices, convicts, and all kinds of desperadoes; for Popery is already out of the question, and plunder all the object. They have exacted sums from many houses to avoid being burnt as Popish. The ringleader Lord George is fled. The Bank, the destruction of all prisons and of the Inns of Court, were the principal aims.

The Magistrates, intimidated by demolition of Fielding's and Justice Hyde's houses, did not dare to act. A general Council was

summoned at Buckingham House, at which the twelve Judges attended. It was determined not to shut up the Courts but to order military execution. Both Houses are adjourned to Monday sevennight, which hurt General Conway so much, who intended yesterday to move for the repeal of the Toleration, and found the House adjourned before he could get to it, though early, that he is gone out of town.

The night passed quietly, and by this evening there will be eighteen thousand men in and round the town. As yet there are more persons killed by drinking than by ball or bayonet. At the great Popish distiller's they swallowed spirits of all kinds, and Kirgate saw men and women lying dead in the streets under barrows as he came home yesterday.

We have now, superabundantly, to fear robbery: 300 desperate villains were released from Newgate. Lady Albemarle was robbed at Mrs. Keppel's door in Pall Mall at twelve at night. Baron D'Aguilar's coach was shot at here last night, close to the Crown.

I have so much exerted my no strength, and had so little sleep these two nights, that I came hither to-day for some rest. It will be but *grim repose*. It is said that this insurrection was expected in France a month ago. Just as I came away Mr. Griffith told me the French were embarking. In short, what may not be expected? Then one turns from what is to come, to helpless misery, that will soon be forgotten but by the sufferers; whole families ruined, wives that tried to drag their husbands out of the mobs and have found them breathless, the terrors of the Catholics, indeed of all foreigners, but one. That Scythian heroine, the Princess Daskiou, is here; her natural brother Rantzau was taken in Monsieur Cordon's Chapel, and was reclaimed by Simonin, and released. *She* herself on Wednesday, I *know*, sent Lord Ashburnham word that his house was marked for destruction. Merciful tigress! it is proof he is not an Emperor.

My bosom, I think, does not want humanity, yet I cannot feel pity for Lord Mansfield. I did feel joy for the four convicts who were released from Newgate within twenty-four hours of their execution; but ought not a man to be taught sensibility, who drove us cross the Rubicon? I would not hurt a hair of his head: but if I sigh for the afflicted innocent, can I blend him with them?

You will call me fool in your own mind, and tell yourself that a week ago I announced that national lethargy would doze into despotism. I have long known how short-sighted my penetration is. I allow all you can think of my littleness of mind. However, I

would not change a mean understanding or a want of spirit for any thing I hold to be wrong, nor think, I beg you, that by that assertion I pretend to any goodness. I am often guilty, but it is not with tranquillity, nor from my soul being steeled against remorse. Still less do I condemn others who act what they think right, or doubt the soundness of the principles of my friends. On the contrary, I honour those who have more firmness than myself; yet in the most quiet times my opinion was exactly what it is now. Many years ago I shocked Mrs. Macaulay by telling her, that had I been Luther and could have foreseen the woes I should occasion, I should have asked myself, whether I was authorised to cause the deaths of three or four hundred thousand persons, that future millions might be advantaged. The Spartan Matron despised my scruples.

Well! confusion is trumps! One only thing I anxiously beg, do not think ill of your friends; I don't mean myself—I am of no consequence, but be assured that you will love even Lord Rockingham when I can tell you something that I cannot write. If I live to see you again,—but ifs are the subterfuges of those that cannot support present unhappiness; whoever can descry connection between *this* instant and anything that is to come, is the maximus of all Apollos. Adieu!

Saturday morning.

I have this moment received two letters from town to tell me that Lord George Gordon was overtaken in his flight to Scotland, and was just brought prisoner to the Horse-Guards. This is all I know yet, except that some say he was seized in the Park, and was not fled.

Wait for the echo.

1931. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Saturday night, late.

Was not I cruelly out of luck, Madam, to have been fishing in troubled waters for two days for your Ladyship's entertainment, and to have come away very few hours before the great pike was hooked? Well, to drop metaphor, here are Garth's lines reversed,

> Thus little villains oft submit to fate,
> That great ones may enjoy the world in state.

Four convicts on the eve of execution are let loose from Newgate, and Lord George Gordon is sent to the Tower. If he is hanged,

the old couplet will recover its credit, for Mr. Wedderburn is Chief Justice.

I flatter myself I shall receive a line from your Ladyship to-morrow morning: I am impatient to hear what you think of *black Wednesday*. I know how much you must have been shocked, but I long to read your own expressions; when you answer, then one is conversing. My sensations are very different from what they were. While in the thick of the conflagration, I was all indignation and a thousand passions. Last night, when sitting silently alone, horror rose as I cooled; and grief succeeded, and then all kinds of gloomy presages. For some time people have said, where will all this end? I as often replied, where will it begin? It is now begun, with a dreadful overture; and I tremble to think what the chorus may be! The sword reigns at present, and saved the capital! What is to depose the sword?—Is it not to be feared, on the other hand, that other swords may be lifted up?—What probability that everything will subside quietly into the natural channel?—Nay, how narrow will that channel be, whenever the prospect is cleared by peace? What a dismal fragment of an empire! yet would that moment were come when we are to take a survey of our ruins! That moment I probably shall not see. When I rose this morning, I found the exertions I had made with such puny powers, had been far beyond what I could bear; I was too sick to go on with dressing myself. This evening I have been abroad, and you shall hear no more of it. I have been with Lady Di., at Richmond, where I found Lady Pembroke, Miss Herbert, and Mr. Brudenell. Lord Herbert is arrived. They told me the melancholy position of Lady Westmorland. She is sister of Lord George Gordon, and wife of Colonel Woodford, who is forced to conceal himself, having been the first officer who gave orders to the soldiers to fire, on the attack of Lord Mansfield's house. How many still more deplorable calamities from the tragedy of this week that one shall never hear of! I will change my style, and, like an epilogue after a moving piece, divert you with a *bon-mot* of George Selwyn. He came to me yesterday morning from Lady Townshend, who, terrified by the fires of the preceding night, talked the language of the Court, instead of Opposition. He said she put him in mind of removed tradesmen, who hang out a board with, "Burnt out from over the way." Good night, Madam, till I receive your letter.

Monday morning, the 12th.

Disappointed! disappointed! not a line from your Ladyship; I

will not send away this till I hear from you. Last night, at Hampton Court, I heard of two Popish chapels demolished at Bath, and one at Bristol. My coachman has just been in Twickenham, and says half Bath is burnt; I trust this is but the natural progress of lies, that increase like a chairman's legs by walking. Mercy on us! we seem to be plunging into the horrors of France, in the reigns of Charles VI. and VII.!—yet, as extremes meet, there is at this moment amazing insensibility. Within these four days I have received five applications for tickets to see my house! One from a set of company who fled from town to avoid the tumults and fires. I suppose Æneas lost Creüsa by her stopping at Sadlers' Wells.

13*th.*

The letter I have this moment received is so kind, Madam, that it effaces all disappointment. Indeed, my impatience made me forget that no post comes in here on Mondays. To-day's letters from town mention no disturbance at Bristol or anywhere else. Every day gained is considerable, at least will be so when there has been time for the history of last week to have spread, and intelligence from the distant counties to be returned. All I have heard to-day is of some alteration to be made to the Riot Act, that Lord George cannot be tried this month, and that the King will go to the House on Monday. I will now answer what is necessary in your Ladyship's and take my leave, for, as you observe, the post arrives late, and I have other letters that I must answer. Mr. Williams interrupted me, and has added a curious anecdote,—and a horrible one, to my collection of the late events. One project of the diabolical incendiaries was to let loose the lions in the Tower, and the lunatics in Bedlam. The latter might be from a fellow feeling in Lord George, but cannibals do not invite wild beasts to their banquets. The Princess Daskiou will certainly communicate the thought to her mistress and accomplice, the Legislatress of Russia.

George, I think, need not fear Mimy's being reclaimed: when parents can give up a child, I have no notion of their caring what becomes of it.

My cousin, the Miss Townshend, whom your Ladyship mentions, is quite a stranger to me. My nephews, nieces, and cousins compose such a clan, that, with all my genealogic propensities, I never saw all of them, though it seems this young lady is one who, according to the proverb, knows Jack Pudding. She shall certainly command a ticket for Strawberry, and I actually enclose one; but when you

talk of enthusiasm, Madam, it is impossible to make an acquaintance on that ground; it would be Jackpudding-ing myself in good earnest.

I do not know whether I am glad or sorry that you must remove from Grosvenor-place. That will depend on your future habitation; but I must finish, and would, if I dared, return the *Dearest*—but there would be a *soupçon* of the Jack Pudding in that too, and therefore I don't.

P.S. I like an ironic sentence in yesterday's 'London Courant,' which says, all our grievances are *red-dressed.*

1932. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

My dear Lord, *Strawberry Hill, June* 10, 1780.

If confusion and every horror are excuses, your Lordship will forgive my not thanking you sooner, as I intended, for the very kind message and invitation you were so good as to leave at my house. I did drive to yours in total ignorance of what was passing, at the very instant you were in such danger in the House of Lords. Thank God! your Lordship and all my friends escaped massacre!

It was my plan, a week ago, to go to Malvern the beginning of July, and to wait [on] your Lordship and Lady Harcourt, going or coming, as should be least inconvenient to you. One must have the confidence of a true enthusiast or a false one to say what one will do three weeks hence! *I will!* is no longer a phrase in the now narrow vocabulary of an Englishman. Two days ago the Mob, to-day the Army,—to-morrow who were, are, will be our masters?

Exhausted with fatigue and watching, I came from town yesterday at two o'clock, to seek a little repose, leaving a fierce calm. Since the early part of Thursday evening, I have not heard of any disturbance; and whether terrified like a brat that has set his frock on fire, or to evoke new legions, Scoticè clans, of Infernals, the Gordon is fled.

Wednesday no mortal pen can describe, that has not seen a city taken by storm; yet who ever saw a capital of the size of London in flames in more than a dozen places, and its own inhabitants rioting in every barbarity? How it escaped a wide conflagration

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

is incomprehensible, and that not threescore lives were lost that night is equally amazing. Treble that number or more were dead by morning by wallowing in the casks of spirits they had staved. I do not exaggerate, my Lord; they sucked them as they flowed about the streets.

Yesterday was more bloody, yet not excessively; though the Army was let loose, and it was merciful to the frantic wretches themselves, who seem to be awed. As men recover from their consternation, they begin to arm for common safety. Zeal soon threw away the mask, and, like Spanish missionaries in Mexico, aimed at nothing but gold. Lady Albemarle was robbed by a horseman on that identical Wednesday night at Mrs. Keppel's door. *The Duke* [of Gloucester], wrapped in a great-coat, and in a hackney coach, was surrounded by the mob in the Fleet Market, and obliged to give them his purse.

How poor a sketch have I given your Lordship of what Guicciardini would have formed a folio! yet we would forget the wretched wives and mothers that will rue that night, and expatiate on the precious manuscripts[1] burnt in Bloomsbury; yet already can I look with more tranquillity backward, than to what is to come. However, one may foresee too much; as one could not foresee what has happened, conjectures are idle, and I will release your Lordship.

Mrs. Mestivyer is a good deal better, and I think not immediately going. If there is any such thing as gratitude, I am most truly

Your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's

Devoted, humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

One o'clock at noon.

The post is just come in: I have two letters to confirm what I heard half an hour ago, that Lord George Gordon was overtaken in his flight to Scotland by a party of light horse, and brought prisoner to the Horse-Guards. This is all I will warrant; for there are twenty different reports already, which there must be at least where one is twenty miles from town. I will still less conjecture or reason, for I do not often guess rightly, and one argues yet worse but on the most certain grounds.

[1] Lord Mansfield's.—CUNNINGHAM.

1933. TO MRS. ABINGTON.

MADAM: *Strawberry Hill, June* 11, 1780.

You may certainly always command me and my house. My common custom is to give a ticket for only four persons at a time; but it would be very insolent in me, when all laws are set at nought, to pretend to prescribe rules. At such times there is a shadow of authority in setting the laws aside by the legislature itself; and though I have no army to supply their place, I declare Mrs. Abington may march through all my dominions at the head of as large a troop as she pleases—I do not say, as she can muster and command; for then I am sure my house would not hold them. The day, too, is at her own choice; and the master is her very obedient humble servant, HOR. WALPOLE.

1934. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

MY DEAR LORD: *Strawberry Hill, June* 12, 1780.

IF the late events had been within the common proportion of news, I would have tried to entertain your Lordship with an account of them; but they were far beyond that size, and could only create horror and indignation. Religion has often been the cloak of injustice, outrage, and villany: in our late tumults, it scarce kept on its mask a moment; its persecution was downright robbery; and it was so drunk, that it killed its banditti faster than they could plunder. The tumults have been carried on in so violent and scandalous a manner, that I trust they will have no copies. When prisons are levelled to the ground, when the Bank is aimed at, and reformation is attempted by conflagrations, the savages of Canada are the only fit allies of Lord George Gordon and his crew. The Tower is much too dignified a prison for him—but he had left no other.[1]

I came out of town on Friday, having seen a good deal of the

[1] A person begging alms of Lord G. G——n, said, "God bless you, my Lord! you and I have been in all the prisons in London." "What do you mean?" cries Lord George; "I never was in any prison but the Tower." "That is true, my Lord," said the other, "and I have been in all the rest." *Peter Cunningham's Jest Book*, 12mo, 1781, p. 30.—CUNNINGHAM.

shocking transactions of Wednesday night—in fact, it was difficult to be in London, and not see or think some part of it in flames. I saw those of the King's Bench, New Prison, and those on the three sides of the Fleet Market, which united into one blaze.[1] The Town and Parks are now one camp—the next disagreeable sight to the capital being in ashes. It will still not have been a fatal tragedy, if it brings the nation *one* and all to their senses. It will still be not quite an unhappy country, if we reflect that the old constitution, exactly as it was in the last reign, was the most desirable of any in the universe. It made us *then* the first people in Europe—we have a vast deal of ground to recover—but can we take a better path than that which King William pointed out to us? I mean the system he left us at the Revolution. I am averse to *all* changes of it—it fitted us just as it was.

For some time even individuals must be upon their guard. Our new and now imprisoned Apostle has delivered so many congenial Saint Peters from gaol, that one hears of nothing but robberies on the highway. Your Lordship's sister, Lady Browne, and I have been at Twickenham-park this evening, and kept together, and had a horseman at our return. Baron d'Aguilar was shot at in that very lane on Thursday night. A troop of the fugitives had rendezvoused in Combe Wood, and were dislodged thence yesterday by the light horse.

I do not know a syllable but what relates to these disturbances. The newspapers have neglected few truths. Lies, without their natural propensity to falsehoods, they could not avoid, for every minute produces some, at least exaggerations. We were threatened with swarms of good Protestants *à bruler* from all quarters, and report sent various detachments from the metropolis on similar errands; but, thank God, they have been but reports! Oh! when shall we have peace and tranquillity? I hope your Lordship and Lady Strafford will at least enjoy the latter in your charming woods. I have long doubted which of our passions is the strongest —perhaps every one of them is equally strong in some person or other—but I have no doubt but ambition is the most detestable, and the most inexcusable; for its mischiefs are by far the most extensive,

[1] In her reply to a letter from Walpole, giving an account of these riots, Madame du Deffand says—"Rien n'est plus affreux que tout ce qui arrive chez vous. Votre liberté ne me séduit point; cette liberté tant vantée me paroit bien plus onéreuse que notre esclavage; mais il ne m'appartient pas de traiter de telles matières: permettez-moi de blâmer votre indiscrétion, de vous aller promener dans les rues pendant ce vacarme."—WRIGHT.

and its enjoyments by no means proportioned to its anxieties. The latter, I believe, is the case of most passions—but then all but ambition cost little pain to any but the possessor. An ambitious man must be divested of all feeling but for himself. The torment of others is his high road to happiness. Were the transmigration of souls true, and accompanied by consciousness, how delighted would Alexander or Crœsus be to find themselves on four legs, and divested of a wish to conquer new worlds, or to heap up all the wealth of this! Adieu, my dear Lord!

1935. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1780.

The Pope need not be alarmed: the rioters thought much more of plundering those of their own communion, than his holiness's flock. To demolish law and prisons was their next great object; and to release prisoners, the only gospel-work they performed. What was the view of the arch-incendiary I do not know, nor what seditious plans were engrafted on or incorporated with his Calvinistic reformation; but it is certain that the number of the perpetrators of all the mischief was very inconsiderable, and two-thirds apprentices and women. Two fortunate circumstances are amazing; that a large portion of the town was not burnt, and that not a single person of any name is killed. The damage, on the contrary, is estimated at a million. I do not send you particulars, for your nephew told me you should have a journal of them from him.

The spectacle—for I was there on the blackest night, the Wednesday,—was tremendous and shocking. The monster that conjured up this tempest is now manacled in the Tower.—But what a nation is Scotland; in every reign engendering traitors to the State, and false and pernicious to the Kings that favour it the most! National prejudices, I know, are very vulgar; but, if there are national characteristics, can one but dislike the soils and climates that concur to produce them?

I shall suspend the prosecution of this letter, for the papers say our ports are still shut. They will soon be re-opened, I trust; for tranquillity is restored in the capital, and in the country has not been disturbed but for one moment at Bath, though near a fortnight is elapsed since the first tumult.

Berkeley Square, Friday, 16th.

I shall change my mind, and send away this fragment to-night; as, though short, it will contain two pieces of intelligence that will give you joy, and I doubt you want some cordials.

Yesterday arrived an account of the surrender of Charleston to Sir Henry Clinton: like the jaundice, I turn everything to the colour of my mind, and cry, "Will it advance peace?" It certainly will have good effect here, and discourage mutineers.—I have not time to dilate more.

The King and his royal brothers [1] are reconciled. This is my second good article.—But the best of all is that we are perfectly tranquil; and ten days having passed since the Black Wednesday, and no accounts having come of the least disturbance, except a momentary one at Bath, it is fairly to be presumed that the whole nation is shocked at the late savage tumults.

Here the scandal taken is so universal, or shame, or fear, that not a single person has been or sent to inquire after the arch-incendiary. Wilkes has very sensibly ridden home on Lord George, and distinguished himself by zeal and spirit.

One strange circumstance in the late delirium was the mixture of rage and consideration in the mob. In most of the fires they threw furniture into the street, did not burn it *in* the houses; nay, made several small bonfires lest a large one should spread to buildings. They would not suffer engines to play on the devoted edifices; yet, the moment the objects were consumed, played the engines on contiguous houses on each side! It is all unaccountable, and I can yet send you no consistent narrative. Much appears to have been sudden fury, and in many places the act of few. In other lights it looks like plan and deep premeditation. Whether it will ever be unravelled, I know not; or whether, like the history of darker ages, falsehood will become history, and then distant periods conjecture that we have transmitted very blundered relations: but, when I know so little of what has passed before my own eyes, I shall not guess how posterity will form their opinions. Adieu! I have not time to say more.

[1] Prince William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, and Prince Henry, Duke of Cumberland.—WALPOLE.

1936. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 15, 1780.

You may like to know one is alive, dear Sir, after a massacre, and the conflagration of a capital. I was in it, both on the Friday and on the *Black Wednesday;* the most horrible sight I ever beheld, and which, for six hours together, I expected to end in half the town being reduced to ashes. I can give you little account of the original of this shocking affair; Negligence was certainly its nurse, and Religion only its godmother. The ostensible author is in the Tower. Twelve or fourteen thousand men have quelled all tumults; and as no bad account is come from the country, except for a moment at Bath, and as eight days have passed,—nay, more, since the commencement, I flatter myself the whole nation is shocked at the scene; and that, if plan there was, it was laid only in and for the metropolis. The lowest and most villanous of the people, and to no great amount, were almost the sole actors.

I hope your electioneering riotry[1] has not, nor will mix in these tumults. It would be most absurd; for Lord Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, Sir George Savile, and Mr. Burke, the patrons of toleration, were devoted to destruction as much as the Ministers. The rails torn from Sir George's house [in Leicester fields] were the chief weapons and instruments of the mob. For the honour of the nation I should be glad to have it proved that the French were the engineers. You and I have lived too long for our comfort—shall we close our eyes in peace?

I will not trouble you more about the arms I sent you: I should like that they were those of the family of Boleyn; and since I

[1] Of the "electioneering riotry" going on at this time in Cambridgeshire, Mr. Cole, in a letter of the 14th of May, gives the following account:—"Electioneering madness and faction have inflamed this county to such a degree, that the peace it has enjoyed for above half a century may take as long a time before it returns again. Yesterday, the three candidates were nominated; the Duke of Rutland's brother, the late Mr. Charles Yorke's son, and Sir Sampson Gideon, whose expenses for this month have been enormous, beyond all belief. Sending my servant on a particular message to Sir Sampson, he found him in bed, not well, and probably half asleep; for he not only wrote the direction to two covers which I sent him, but sealed them both, though they were only covers. I wonder, indeed, that he is alive, considering the immense fatigue and necessary drinking he must undergo—a miserable hard task to get into Parliament!" The contest terminated in the return of Lord Robert Manners, who died, in April 1782, of the wounds he received in the great sea-fight in the West Indies; and of Mr. Philip Yorke, who, in 1790, succeeded his uncle as Earl of Hardwicke.—Wright.

cannot be sure they were not, why should not I fancy them so? I revert to the prayer for peace. You and I, that can amuse ourselves with our books and papers, feel as much indignation at the turbulent as they have scorn for us. It is hard at least that they who disturb nobody can have no asylum in which to pursue their innoxious indolence! Who is secure against Jack Straw and a whirlwind? How I abominate Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, who routed the poor Otaheitans out of the centre of the ocean, and carried our abominable passions amongst them! not even that poor little speck could escape European restlessness. Well, I have seen many tempestuous scenes, and outlived them! the present prospect is too thick to see through—it is well hope never forsakes us. Adieu!

1937. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, June 16, at night.

Depend upon it, Madam, you will always find my conduct simple and void of mystery. I have but two reasons for silence,—ignorance, or from what secrets I know being those of others, not my own. The former was the cause of my not mentioning the reconciliation of the King and his brothers. I knew nothing of it but common report till Tuesday last, when Miss Keppel told me in a postscript that the Duke of Gloucester had asked an audience, and been graciously received. On Thursday the Duchess herself sent me word of it, and desired me to come to town. I came to-day, and have been with her this evening; and when I came away just now, which was past eleven, the Duke was not come back from Kew, where he had been to pass the evening with the Prince of Wales. Not a word has passed between the brothers about the Duchess. But you may understand that the two Dukes have different ideas, for the Duke of Cumberland was at the drawing-room yesterday without his Duchess, and the Duke of Gloucester was not. For the command of the Army, I believe his Royal Highness expects it no more than I do. This is the naked truth, and which I could not have told you six hours ago: in my last, to have talked vaguely of what I did not know, would really have looked mysterious.

The conquest of Charleston is a great event at the present moment: not a good one if it ensanguines us against peace. I neither understand military details nor love them for that reason.

But this success is coupled with a very remarkable event. A Colonel Scott, I think a prisoner, says the Americans are sick of the war, but have been buoyed up by Spanish gold, and by *French promises of the conflagration of London*—a hellish sort of war, but who set the precedent? The Court talk much of a plot, and this anecdote is corroborative. Indeed I cannot at all agree with Mr. F.[1] in wishing Lord George Gordon may not be found guilty. He is so black in my eyes already, that though I have infinite compassion for criminals, I never heard of one I should pity less. If he is the source of our being ruled by an army, I shall abhor him still more. Have you heard, Madam, that the common soldiers style one another *your worship*, as being the only Justices of Peace?

I have sent to inquire after Mr. Fox, and hear he is better with great pleasure. General Conway was setting out for Jersey, but the alarm was ill-founded. I know nothing of Lord Beauchamp's deposition against the Lord Mayor, but what I saw in the papers. Mr. Duane, I believe, is not yet settled at Twickenham,[2] as the house and court are full of workmen; but I have had no time yet to make my visits, or think of them. Nor have I seen Miss Vernon; nor have I been to the Twilights at Bedford-house. In truth, I have thought of nothing but that horrible Wednesday and its consequences. Those that I immediately apprehended, insurrections and like tumults, in the country, seem, thank God, not likely to ensue. My disorder was merely fatigue and a sick mind. I long to sink into calm stupidity. These tempests brush me up and revive me for a moment, but I had rather wear out quietly with my Dowagers of Twickenham at Tredrille. This country cannot recover its splendour: it will be for some time the seat of distractions; and, when exhausted, be an insignificant solitude under a Bashaw. I have no loftier wish than to be one of the owls that hoot in an obscure village in the evening and leave desolated cities to vultures and beasts of prey.

1938. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 23, 1780.

I ENTREAT your Ladyship not to suspect yourself of impertinence when you are obliging; nor me of indirect meanings, when I speak

[1] Probably Mr. Fitzpatrick, afterwards General.—R. VERNON SMITH.

[2] Mrs. Duane's house [at Twickenham] was formerly the residence of the profligate Duke of Wharton. *Lysons* (*from the information of the Earl of Orford*).—CUNNINGHAM.

plainly. I did see Lord Ossory on Tuesday, and you will find that though I avoided details, my answer was the outline of what had passed. It is a subject on which I never love to write; because, to begin, it has the air of an air, which I dislike; and when one answers, one cannot, at every sentence, say, "Pray don't repeat this;" or, "This may be repeated." And yet that is necessary on points that occasion discussion, and on which one does not like to be quoted.

Considering what a crop there is of discordant opinions, and the quantity of matter that enters into head-dresses at present, it will be very serious, Madam, if the ladies come to pulling caps. The fields of battle will be strewed with strange fragments! but everything seems to be returning to chaos! I am come back to this little nook, in hopes it will escape the general hurly-burly. Lord Ossory agreed with my sentiments more almost than any man I meet with. Mine about this country, I own, are total despair: nor do I see from our present position, our present generation of actors, and from our present enemies, whence aught but ruin should come, either to the nation or constitution, and probably to both,—and if either is undone what signifies the other? The felicity of universal confusion encourages a war within a war; and the attention to the internal one will absorb all regard to the other; and by the time absolute power is attained, it will, like abstract powers, be charming in speculation, but prove to be nothing but the *vis inertiæ*. I am weary of such scenes and prospects, and have quitted them. There may, perhaps, be farther combustions; but whether expected or not, we shall affect to expect them, and prepare—not to prevent, but to profit of them; which, I doubt, was a little the case lately. Have you never known a chambermaid, Madam, that would tick at a chandler's shop to the amount of six or seven shillings, rather than part with a favourite crown-piece?

I have got the print of Lady Gertrude [Fitzpatrick],[1] but it is poorly executed, and faint and unfinished; however, it is sweetly pretty, though it has not half the countenances of the original. Pray tell me, when you have taken one, where your new house is. Do you really move, like a pawn, only an inch farther in Grosvenor Place?

My hay is cut, and it has rained all day: well, Madam, is it not

[1] From Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture of her as a child in my possession.—R. Vernon Smith.

better to have only annual distresses, than to attend to old Madam England's cancers and amputation of limbs? I am trying to learn all the doctrines of selfishness, and to care for nothing but my own enjoyments. If it is true that the love of one's country and such virtues are but emanations of self-love, is it not wise to lop them when they no longer flatter one's vanity? In short, to speak with the dignity that becomes every man who prefers himself to all the world, if my country is ever worthy of me I will think on it again! if the prodigal does not return and repent, I will eat the fatted calf by myself.

1939. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 29, 1780.

If your Ladyship did not give me themes, I should certainly not think of writing, for I know nothing but what the 'Morning Chronicle' said yesterday, and have thought on nothing but my hay, though I have not a load half so big as a lady's head-dress; but the weather is so benevolent, that I sit amongst the reapers till nine at night, and do not wish myself on the parade.

I had heard of Lord Grantham's match, and suppose he has contracted some Spanish ideas, and minds blood more than beauty. If the lady ceases to be your neighbour, she will become more your acquaintance. I know no more of the Duchess of Ancaster's misfortunes, and heard before I came out of town that Lady Willoughby was out of danger.

The Princess Daskiou was here this morning with her horde of Tartars, but I kept out of sight, having nothing to regale her but one old horse. I have paid my visit to Lord and Lady Sefton, who do not suit me quite so well as poor Lady Blandford.

Have you heard, Madam, that on Lord Effingham's coming to life, report has shot old Lord Godolphin? The monument to be sure would as soon head a riot.

I have deferred my journey to Malvern for a fortnight or three weeks; I shall regret Strawberry less in August; and, besides, have been remarkably well for this last fortnight; and, besides, find it mighty difficult to set about anything, so totally is all my activity gone. I think there is nothing but your Ladyship that has not lost influence over me. You can make me exert even a talent I never had, as I am going to give you a proof. The lines are indifferent enough,

but prompt obedience, like charity, can cover a dozen bad verses; and as I scribbled them while the Tartars were in the house, and send them by the return of the post, you may be sure I do not think them fit to be shown, and beg you will not let them go out of your hands. The theme was too good not to be better treated; and what will do in a private letter will not stand criticism, and still less, if taken for a cool design of venting indignation; but here they are, and if they will provoke Mr. Fitzpatrick to write better, you and I shall both be better satisfied.

When mitred masters o'er a groaning land
Extend the Church's all-usurping hand,
No more our woods are ours; our mansions slide
To glut some pontiff's patriarchal pride;
And star-chambers in laws defiance grant
Whate'er the Gospel's appetites can want.
Hence then—nor longer o'er the genial room
Shall Laud's ill-omen'd aspect hurl its gloom.
No tyrant Stuart shall to crosiers give,
And borrow from the gift, Prerogative.
Each free-born lord shall his own rights assert,
Nor vassals be enchain'd but by the heart;
While each calm Ossory's benignant smile
Diffuses old good-humour round our isle.

Heart and *assert* are bad rhymes, and do not agree in sound or sense, but are like an address that echoes a Royal Speech with the unfelt protestations of slaves.

Pray send me directions to your camp; do the Infantas make the campaign? The report here is that the Parliament is immediately to be dissolved, in hopes of another phœnix rising out of the ashes of London. In that case I conclude Lady Gertrude will remain at Ampthill to keep open house. The *province* of Bedfordshire I trust will stick close to the house.

1940. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

June 29, 1780.

Since the great combustion I have not known what to write, nor did Mr. Stonhewer know where you are. I shall prepare this against he sends me word whither to direct it, as he has promised. My opinion of the causes of the late tumults is a very vague one, nor shall I decide till I learn more. Whatever Lord G. Gordon meant, Anti-Catholicism seems not only to have had little, but even only a momentary hand in the riots. Some Americans, perhaps,

taught by the lessons we have given them of burning towns, joined in the opportunity; a thousand discontents added others, and all the indigent villains in London seized the opportunity and improved it, not to mention how many concurred from wanton folly without design. The Court at first had a mind to bestow a plot on France, Spain, and the Americans, but now seem to abandon that plan. France, solicited by American agents, might as she used to do when teased by the Jacobites, contribute a little money, a few arms, and some rogues, of whom she was willing to disburthen herself, but I do not imagine it was a branch of her political schemes to burn London. She would have had some force ready to pour in and distract us in some other quarter, while the army should be all drawn to the capital.

I am much more inclined to suppose that a Court plot was engrafted early on the prospect of tumults, nay, negative *plots*. I do not believe they intended to have Lord Stormont mobbed, Lord Sandwich almost murdered, nor Lord Mansfield's house destroyed, but Sir George Savile, the Duke of Richmond, and Burke, were more devoted by the zealot part of the mob than any of the Cabinet; so few or such no precautions were taken after such provoking notice had been given by Lord George Gordon, that it is not very injurious to conclude that a necessity for calling the Army together to suppress an insurrection was no very disagreeable opportunity.

It has certainly answered so roundly, that I do believe the machinist would forgive the imputation, in consideration of the honour it would do to his policy. Even Lord Mansfield has risen like a phœnix from the flames, and vomits martial law, as if all law books were burnt as well as his own; nay, like *his* plate, almost all Party is melted into a mass of bullion Loyalty.

This was a moment I have long dreaded! I had no doubt but the Court wished insurrections. It was strong enough *at home* to suppress them, and the suppression would unite *all* the military and militia, and all under one standard, and so I am persuaded it has already.

To complete our destruction there is an universal *Anarchy of opinion;* no three men agree on any three propositions. Lord Shelburne and Lord Rockingham are bitter enemies. Burke, who has declared himself educated by an Anabaptist, is mad for toleration. The Duke of Richmond and Charles Fox agree with him on that point, while the Duke is as violent for annual parliaments as the Rockinghams against them. Lord Shelburne, Lord Camden,

and the Duke of Grafton are as strongly anti-papistic. The Court indeed is as full of dissension; but if interest divides men it reunites them too, which is not the case of opinions; and such a multitude of them has been indiscreetly broached by opposition itself, that while the Court keeps steady to two points only, prerogative and the subjugation of America, it may perhaps succeed, at least in the first, before opposition will agree on a single one. The Court would carry the other also, I think, if it had the sense to temporise and consent to a tolerable pacification; but having had originally no fund of genuine wisdom, and having squandered foolishly and anticipated all its resources, it will as usual mistake prosperity for means, and blunder away its opportunities under the notion of firmness. France and ten thousand other concurrent impediments will lie still in the way, so that the whole of my reasoning centres in this, that we are in every light undone; that anarchy will reign for some time, and despotism succeed when we are as much ruined by labouring towards it, as we should have been in a few years if it had taken place when first projected.

This is the sketch of my present thoughts: whether consistent with other letters that I have written to you lately, I cannot remember. I generally judge from the complexion of circumstances, nor do I know a better guide in times when a nation is at its dregs, and the men that do think and act from principle are not only few, but distracted by subdivisions of sentiments, and have no one general system in common. My idea was to adhere to the precise line of the constitution, as a standard of union, and to endeavour to restore it, but that moment is gone, or never was arrived: I see nothing now before me on which to count, except the folly that governs, and which may throw away the advantages it has recovered. That is our sole chance; I have no head for calculating chances, but still less for computing what good may arise out of folly, mischief, and wickedness.

There has been more than one negotiation for partial changes, and on very different foundations. Lord Rockingham at the very moment that the public thought him more than leaning towards the Ministers, took the opportunity of reading a very explicit lecture against them in the closet. At this instant (June 23rd) I think it much more likely that the Parliament will be soon dissolved, trusting to the terror spread by the late tumults that none but good Catholics will be returned. The army no doubt will be retained at the head-quarters, unless France should call it off, which does not

seem probable. Lord Mansfield will have courage to coin what law he pleases, while the House of Lords is guarded by Dragoons; and the Chancellor, whom all sides blindly concur in crying up to the skies, has spirit enough of his own to execute any enterprise to which he shall be commanded; and is as ready as Maupeou to annihilate parliaments, if timidity and cunning did not prefer *voting* despotism to lay aside votes.

I could expatiate on many particulars of this letter, if we were together. More I shall not know beyond the information of the newspapers, for I shall scarce look at London this summer. One sees there nothing but the royal wish realised, red and blue coats; whoever makes his court makes a campaign. I was not born to be a courtier or a soldier. There is no hope left for an Englishman! one can expect but to be laid prostrate by France or to be enslaved at home; perhaps both, though France does not seem to see all her advantages. We have contributed nine parts in ten to our own ruin; like us she set out with vapouring and has performed as little.

How despicable must both England and France appear to those active monopolisers of usurpation, the sovereigns of Prussia, Russia, and Germany! Spain is still more contemptible, who enters into a quarrel against its will, and is content with beating its head against the rocks of Gibraltar, but France at least has a harvest to come; she cannot have forgotten the treaties of Utrecht and Paris, and never wants a Lord Bolingbroke or a Lord Bute to negotiate for our shame, when she is tired of war. Lord Mansfield no doubt hopes to live to that dear hour, and see Lord Stormont return to Paris to sign our last cession of Empire.

June 29, 1780.

I send this letter to town by a servant, and shall beg Mr. Stonhewer to convey it to you by the coach or waggon. I have not heard a syllable of news this week: events must seek me, for I shall not inquire after them, and what signifies writing conjectures or reflections?[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *Aston, July* 12, 1780.

I HAVE been a tour into the north (for you know I am in the west) any time these six weeks, and though your letters were duly forwarded to me, I postponed answering them, as I could only send you back reflections on the shocking scenes you were witness to, which you must have made better on the spot. Amongst all my acquaintance I know not above two, besides yourself, who agreed with me from the first of the impropriety of introducing that Bill which was the cause of the tumult; and I trust that nothing which has been said either by my Lord Chancellor [Thurlow] or the Right Reverend Bench has led us to change our opinion. I shall as soon believe, with

1941. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.

My Lord, [1780.]

Though I think myself so inconsiderable a man, that it would be impertinent to give an account of my conduct to the public; yet, as I should be most unhappy to lie under any suspicion in the eyes of my friend of acting or being silent from mercenary views in the present most serious moment; I declare that my reasons for not appearing in Westminster Hall and signing a petition to Parliament *for a necessary and effectual reform of the expenditure of public money*, are not from disapprobation of the measure, or from a wish that so salutary a measure should miscarry, or from the least disposition to court favour anywhere, or with any party; the last of which mean and interested views would be inconsistent with the whole tenor of my life, and shall never stain the small remaining part of it.

But the reason of my not signing such petition is, that possessing nothing but sinecure places, I must consider myself rather as a remote object of the reformation, than as a proper person to demand it. To petition for the abolition of sinecure places, and to hope not to be included in the reduction, would be unworthy of a man. To

Sir Thomas Mills, that Mr. Maskall, whom I never saw, was a rioter, and that I could swear to him as such, as that in these times such a Bill was expedient.

However, it has given Government a fair handle to proceed by, and the speech I have just read shows me they will proceed by it. I cannot take the compliment you make us Associators, of the Duke of Richmond being our coadjutor, so cordially as you may expect I should. It is certain, when the Committee deputies met, that persons sent by him occasioned an alteration in the form of our Association, which many of us think is for the worse, and yet after that, he in less than two months' time, brings a bill into the House which goes further than the warmest of us would ever have attempted to have gone. But, in short, I see so much inconclusiveness on all sides, that I find myself obliged to abide by my own opinions, merely because they have been my old opinions; and I act no other part under the ministration of Lord North than I should have done, had an opportunity offered, under that of the Duke of Newcastle, and should do again were there to be an administration under my Lord Rockingham. How far am I to congratulate on the Royal fraternal reconciliations? I fancy not much if a Court bird (a little lame or so), which I have lately heard, sings a true song. Tell me, however, and I'll prepare my *congratulatio Astonica*.

I sincerely hope you will continue your most agreeable Historico-politico-litterario Gazettes; they make my principal entertainment at this distance from town, and if I do not thank you for them so frequently as I ought, blame me not on that score: a man that has nothing but half pension to pay with, must tire a person that waits till he changes a guinea. Believe me at all times, even times worse than the present,

Your most obliged
And faithful humble servant,
W. Mason.

say I was ready to resign mine, would be hypocritic ostentation [for no man, I believe, is ready to part with his whole income], and would be a hardship on others in the same predicament, who should be unwilling to offer the same sacrifice, and would be honester men, as more sincere.

The line of conduct, therefore, that I think the most decent for me to take, is to be totally silent, and submit myself to the determination of the legislature of my country, and to be content with what in its wisdom it shall decide for the benefit of the nation. I hold nothing from personal merit or services, and must not complain if my ease and comforts are diminished for the public good. But I cannot in conscience sign a request for the abolition of the places of others, who hold them by law, as I do mine, and who are more worthy of them than I am of mine. Neither can I demand the abolition of places, not held for life, but the possessors of which are more useful members of society, have smaller incomes than mine, and execute more business than I do, who execute none—for I must speak the truth and the whole truth. It would be a great want of feeling and of generosity in me, to desire that any man should be discarded, who is removable at pleasure, because nothing but a new law can remove me from my place.

Upon the whole, my Lord, it is no selfishness or change in my principles that makes me decline signing the petition. I shall die in the principles I have ever invariably professed. My fortune may be decreased or taken away; but it never shall be augmented by any employment, pension, or favour, beyond what I now enjoy by the gift of my father alone. I have more than I can pretend to deserve; and I beg your Lordship, in whose incorruptible integrity I have the firmest confidence, to produce this testimony under my own hand, if ever I deviate from what I have here professed. And I will flatter myself that if your Lordship should hear me suspected, from not signing any petition, of having swerved from my principles, you will do me the justice to defend me from that imputation. My character cannot be safer than in your Lordship's hands, and in them I beg leave to deposit it—for, as next to the imputation of being mercenary, I dread the charge of vanity, I entreat that this letter may not be made public. I am of too little consequence to give myself airs of clearing my conduct before it is censured; and am so obscure a man, that I may never be mentioned; and therefore I will certainly not thrust myself upon the public eye from self-conceit and with an unnecessary parade, which I despise. Allow

me the honour of choosing your Lordship for my confessor, and with leaving my conscience in your trust. I am ready, with the utmost submission to the laws of my country, to take my fate with others in whatever shall be decided. I ask no favour or partiality; I am entitled to none; I have no merits to plead—but I cannot think it would become me to be at once a petitioner, and a party petitioned against. I have the honour to be with the highest esteem, my Lord,

Your Lordship's
Most obedient humble servant,
HORACE WALPOLE.

1942. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, July 4, 1780.

I ANSWER your letter the moment I receive it, to beg you will by no means take any notice, not even indirectly and without my name, of the 'Life' of Mr. Baker. I am earnest against its being known to exist. I should be teased to show it. Mr. Gough might inquire about it—I do not desire his acquaintance; and above all things I am determined, if I can help it, to have no controversy while I live. You know I have hitherto suppressed my answers to the critics of 'Richard III.' for that reason: and above all things, I hate theologic or political controversy — nor need you fear my disputing with you, though we disagree very considerably indeed about Papists and Presbyterians. I hope you have not yet sent the manuscript to Mr. Lort, and, if you have not, do entreat you to efface undecipherably what you have said about my 'Life' of Mr. Baker.

Pray satisfy me that no mention of it shall appear in print. I can by no means consent to it, and I am sure you will prevent it. Yours sincerely.

1943. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, July 6, 1780.

IF I did not think that you have a satisfaction in hearing from me, and were not unwilling to grow remiss after a perseverance of forty years, I should be disposed to devolve on your nephew the function of sending you intelligence. In good truth, I am ashamed of the office. We make a ridiculous figure in every light: there is

no dignity or consistence anywhere. The Government, the Parliament, the parties, or rather the factions, or rather their fractions, do and undo, cross over and figure in, and seem to have neither plan nor object. The incoherencies of the last six months could only be described by a person accustomed to draw out dances for the stage. In December the tide ran into petitions and associations: the House of Commons voted the danger of prerogative, unvoted it again, were for satisfying the petitioners, and then did not give them a crumb of bread: then we were alarmed with Popery, and the town was set on fire: next, we were to revise toleration,—that was changed for new precautions against increase of Papists: then our Lords the Bishops were for tolerating Popery, because it was decreasing: then the Chancellor declared he had always disliked the indulgence; but, in contradiction to the favourers of it, would himself favour their educating their children: and then—ay, then,—the new bill of regulations was thrown out, nobody knows why or wherefore. If you can make head or tail of all this, you are wiser than I!

The next chapter is that of the rioters, whose trials are begun. A score have been tried, and most of them condemned. They are apprentices, women, a black girl, and two or three escaped convicts. And these Catilines, without plan, plot, connection, or object, threw a million of inhabitants into consternation, burnt their houses about their ears, besieged the Parliament, drove it to adjourn for ten days, and have saddled the capital with ten thousand men; and still terrify us so dreadfully, that we dare not dismiss two camps at our gates, lest a Negro miss, and her regiment of street-walkers, should overturn the State. Not a Frenchman, not an American, appears to have had a finger in a single outrage. Oh! we are a magnanimous people! and Europe must wait with awe for the result of this campaign of bonfires! I am so ashamed of this *dénouement* of a tragedy that was horrible to behold from the number of conflagrations, and which becomes ridiculous when one perceives how easily it might have been prevented or suppressed, that I shall beg to be excused from saying any more upon it, and shall change it for a private subject, that is very agreeeable to me; and, when the public stands in a contemptible light, domestic events rise in importance.

Lord Egremont,[1] who has for some time been in love with my

[1] George O'Brien Windham, third Earl of Egremont, born 1751, died 1837. The Earl was a great encourager of the English School of Painting and Sculpture.—CUNNINGHAM.

niece Lady Maria Waldegrave, the Duchess's second daughter, has at last had an audience, and demanded her. He is eight-and-twenty, is handsome, and has between twenty and thirty thousand a year. You may imagine he was not rejected by either mother or daughter. The daughter, with a charming person, is less beautiful than either of her sisters, though more liked by most men. She has spirit, a great deal of wit, and the sagacity and good-sense of her father, with constant good-humour and cheerfulness. We are all happy with this alliance, and Lord Egremont's family shows general satisfaction. I, who live to see so many strange events, did not expect formerly that Sir William Windham's[1] grandson would marry Sir Robert Walpole's great-grand-daughter, to the equal content of both houses. The Duke and Duchess, with the little Prince and Princess, the bride, her sisters, Lady Egremont,[2] and her son the bridegroom, were all at Ranelagh together last night. I satisfied myself with seeing them at Gloucester-house before they went. The company, I hear, were pleased with this exhibition; and, in truth, it was worth seeing. The Duchess's beauty still marks her as the principal object. But is not my letter like one of Shakespeare's historic plays—insurrections, a marriage, trials, a Court-pageant?—It is amusement to one who looks on all, as I do, with tranquil eyes, and whose plan it certainly never was to be included in any royal drama. It was one of Fortune's caprices, who loves to throw her vanities into the lap of one who never stirred an inch to seek or meet them. To-morrow I shall return alone to my little hill; pleased that my family are happy, but mourning for the disgraces of England. A little while, and England and my family will be no more my care!

1944. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 15, 1780.

As my gazettes owed their whole fund of merit to my being in London, and to your being in the North West, with the sole though uncommon appendix of my telling you nothing but what I believe

[1] Sir William Windham, Chancellor of the Exchequer at the end of the reign of Queen Anne, was a principal leader of the Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole.—WALPOLE.

[2] Alicia, daughter of Lord Carpenter, Countess-Dowager of Egremont. She married secondly Count Bruhl, Minister from Saxony, and was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte.—WALPOLE.

true, or telling you anything more but as report; I don't know whether I do not comply too literally with your request if I write when I can send you neither a political nor a literary gazette. I scarce ever look at London—*quid Romæ faciam?* I am in utter ignorance, nay, I am sure there is nothing new, for Cambridge was here this morning, and had nothing in his budget of more importance than the Duke of Montagu's being set out for Scotland, which you may repay by informing me when Lady Conyers's wet nurse arrives. The notion is that Lord George Gordon is not to be tried; Mr. Cambridge said, "if not, he guessed why;" I had not the curiosity to ask him what he guessed. I have buried my curiosity; what can happen that is worth learning!

You ask me if you shall send me a *congratulatio Astonica*—no: not unless it can be preceded identically in every particular like its predecessors, by a *luctus*. Your lame bird chirped truly: of which hereafter.

My Court is busily occupied by a great wedding; the Duchess's [Gloucester's] second infanta, Donna Maria, is going to be married to the Conde di Egremont.[1] It's he is grandson of Sir William Windham, and descended from proud dull old Somerset. I flatter myself their children will be dashed with loyalty, pride, and stupidity enough (in spite of Lady Maria's wit, and drops of Sir Robert's blood) to fit them for being grandees of the first class in the rising monarchy. Don't you believe that the Bavarian nobles were very vain of their *Elector* becoming the *Emperor* Charles VII., though it cost him his dominions. These hymeneals will prevent my going to Malvern, to which I had no great fancy, especially as I am in much better health than I was last summer.

I have no more paragraphs for you but a history that is both literary and political; no, not that, but exactly of the gender of our late politics; in short riotic. You must know an embankment is making at Richmond for drawing barges, for the benefit of the City's trade. It encroaches on the garden of Colman, manager of the little theatre in the Haymarket. He cut away the piles; the City went to law with him and the town of Richmond, and cast them, and renewed the invasion. On Monday evening Colman hired an *Association*, who stormed and levelled the new works, and knocked down two persons who opposed them, and half-killed one. A

[1] The Earl jilted Donna Maria and died unmarried;—Donna Maria married, 16th. Nov. 1784, George Henry Fitzroy, Earl of Euston, afterwards (1811) Duke of Grafton. The Countess of Euston died 1st Feb. 1808.—CUNNINGHAM.

committee of the City arrived on Thursday in their barge, and (I suppose by authority of Lord Amherst countersigned by Lord Bathurst) seized twenty of the rioters, and now hold them imprisoned on board their floating King's bench, under a guard of the military, who are applied to all sauces. In a new farce of Colman, called 'The Manager in Distress,' I found t'other day the portrait of Cambridge in the character of a newsmonger, *who lives about twelve miles from town*. I wondered this was so specifically marked, but he dropped this morning that he had staved off the nuisance of the embankment on his side of the river (for he lives directly opposite to Colman) by a clause in the Act of Parliament, and that offence I suppose dragged him on the stage; which is a little hard, as he had the same right to feel what Colman so much resents, and he is truly, I mean Cambridge, so benevolent and inoffensive a man, that his little foible does not deserve such treatment.

When shall you go to Nuneham? I should like to meet you there, I expect Sandby every day, who is to attempt Lady Di's drawings for my Play in his new Aquatinta. It is a thousand pities they should exist only in one septinity, and that the world should have no idea of the powers of her genius if the originals should perish.[1] Bartolozzi has executed very well the drawing of her two daughters, but they have not half the ingredients, passions, graces, horrors, scenes, expressions, of my seven pictures. I am writing in their own closet, and it is having the continence of Scipio to say no more about them, though you know them so well; but how infinitely pleasanter if you was sitting here and talking them over! What shackled conversations are letters when one gasps for effusion! you can rhyme your sensations and stamp them immortal, and gulp them, and they half choke me; pray breathe for me, and send me something to help me—as the apothecaries say,—expectorate.

1945. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

July 18, 1780.

Had I known whither to direct, I should not have waited for your ladyship's congratulations (which I owed you on Lady Shelburne's delivery[2]), but should have announced Lady Maria's approaching

[1] This *septinity* of drawings by Lady Di, in ebony and gold frames, were sold to Colonel Damer, M.P., at the Strawberry Hill sale, for 13*l.* 13*s.*—Cunningham.

[2] Of the present (1857) Marquis of Lansdowne.—Cunningham.

coronet. It has many agreeable faces (after some shades). The best, next to the splendour, is the satisfaction which all Lord Egremont's family express on the occasion. Lady Egremont, Count Bruhl, Mr. Herbert, and Lady Elizabeth have been presented at Gloucester House; and Mr. Marsham and Lady Frances are coming to town on purpose. You will, I believe, approve that having full powers to treat with Lord Egremont, I told him the Duchess would leave the terms to him, that no advantage would be taken of his passion, and that he should decide what he should think was proper for his widow and the Duchess's daughter. Lady Egremont very handsomely told me, that if it was left to the lawyers they would be guided by her jointure, which is but two thousand; but as the times are more extravagant and more dear now, she thought Lady Maria ought to have three. It is pleasant to deal in this way, and not commence union with a family as if one was undermining it; so now I am to have Sir William Windham's grandson for one of my numerous nephews! I believe I shall live to be the world's uncle.

You have lost your neighbour, Mrs. Page,[1] I hear, Madam, and that she has made a very reasonable Will, and dispensed her money pretty equally amongst the Howes.

July 18.

I wrote the preceding page some days ago on receiving your Ladyship's last, and in expectation of a direction; but it is arrived so late, that it has made all I have said stale; however, I send it, as it tells you what relates to our great wedding; except that my moderation has not been adopted, but the jointure is to be four thousand, and the pin-money one. The wedding we think will be in about three weeks.

I am glad your Ladyship bathes in so beautiful a prospect; though I think the Tritons enjoy a better when you bathe. Glastonbury I never saw; the Peter Burrell, the proprietor, I suppose is either the uncle of Mr. Burrell, the present Lord Consort of Willoughby, or he himself; I know the grandfather's name was Peter. You are too hard, I think, on the remarried widower. His marrying again so soon is, in my opinion, a better proof of his love for his last wife, than his creation of a monument for her. He was impatient to be as happy as he had been. It requires more philosophy to venture a second time, when the first marriage is unprosperous. Your account of the bishop's tomb at Glastonbury, Madam, seems typical of what

[1] The Hon. Mrs. Page, relict of Thomas Page, Esq.; and aunt to Lord Viscount Howe.—CUNNINGHAM.

is coming. The bishop was kicked into the abbot's kitchen, you say, and then defaced by the soldiers. Abbots mayhap may grow luxurious on the spoils of bishops, and the army complete the depredation. Most of the present Bench deserve such a fate.

Your Lady Jacob reminds me of what happened to myself five-and-twenty years ago. I went to see the painted glass of Messing Church, in Essex, and dined at an ale-house. The landlady entertained me with *bon-mots* of *Mr. Charles*, just as if I had known him, and was much surprised I had never heard of him. He was a Mr. Charles Luckyn, a younger brother or uncle of the late Lord Grimston, had been dead some years, but had been the George Selwyn or Hare of that village—such is fame! This is a copy in miniature of that admirable chapter in Voltaire, where a Chinese goes into a bookseller's shop, and they are mutually astonished at each other's ignorance of the great names in their different regions.

I am forced to comment your paragraphs, Madam, for I have nothing to send you in return. The only novelty I know, is, that we have had a riot of our own at Richmond, where an embankment for barge-horses being carried before Mr. Colman's (the manager) garden by the City, he, feeling himself, like Agamemnon, a king of kings, behaved with equal *hauteur*, and levied a mob to destroy the works, which they did with hatchets last week in open daylight. The City, three days after, sent a naval force, consisting of one barge with a committee on board, who seized thirteen of the rioters, and sent them to London, where they were bailed; but the barge remains *encamped* near the bridge, according to the precedent in London; yet, notwithstanding the terror spread through Europe by the camps in the two parks, and by the barge at Richmond, fifteen Russian men-of-war are arrived at Copenhagen, and are expected southwards, with no friendly dispositions towards us. But what signifies any credit we lose abroad, while we are all *puissant* at home, and can bestow the diadem of Greenwich Hospital on Sir Hugh Palliser? Is not it more eligible to be emperor of ten miles round London, than to extend our empire as Lord Chatham did from the Oronooco to Japan?

I shall conclude this rhapsody with a dismal adventure that happened to me yesterday. The door opened, and Margaret entered with her apron spread over both arms, as a midwife presents a child to be baptized, and bearing, as I thought, the longest, leanest, naked babe I ever beheld. As she approached, I perceived that master or

miss had no head, but a bloody neck. "Heavens!" said I, "what have you got there?" "A friend of mine has sent me a fawn, if your honour pleases to accept it." "For Heaven's sake," said I, "take it away, I could as soon eat a child:" however, I did call her again, and begged her pardon for having treated her present so brutally; but one must have been a cannibal to have ever borne the sight of it again.

The Duchess [of Gloucester] told me to-night, at the Pavilions, that your aunt is going to carry her grandson abroad, and takes the two Misses Vernon, and not her niece Dorothea.[1] Whence comes that dereliction?

I am sorry I have no talent for Piscatory Eclogues, since your fishermen are so polished and harmonious, and their fish-wives such flageolets. Eelinda and Salmonia would be musical names, and Turbotto and Jan Dorado of no harsh sound; but you say, *when you climb the hills*—alas! I can climb still less than write poetry—oh! on looking again at your Ladyship's description, I see I have made a mistake, and that you ask not what Mr. Burrell, but what Mr. Bladen is proprietor of Glastonbury. In truth, I know not—I know *I* am proprietor of the chair of Johannes *Arthurus* the monk of Glastonbury, and once made the present Archbishop of Canterbury [Cornwallis] sit in it at breakfast; but I will reserve it now for a real abbot. It is too much honour for a renegade. If the pope sends us a genuine Austin, well and good.

I do now expect all Martinico ships safe in Torbay—not because Sir Hugh is president of crippled sailors, but because *Venus orta mari mare præstat eunti.*—Good night, Madam!

1946. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, July 24, 1780.

I RECEIVED yours of June 30th, and have this moment got that of the 8th of this month, which tells me how opportunely mine appeared to disperse M. de Barbantan's fictitious visions. It will be fortunate if I am able hereafter to contradict the superstructure he shall raise on the junction of the fleets of Bourbon, to the amount

[1] Dorothea Wrottesley, married, 1780, Baron Kutzleber, Minister from Hesse Cassel, survived her husband, and died 2nd Oct. 1822. She was the daughter of Rev. R. Wrottesley and Lady Mary Leveson Gower, consequently niece to Gertrude, Duchess of Bedford.—R. VERNON SMITH.

of thirty-six sail, in the West Indies; where, I doubt, Sir George Rodney is far from superior. *We* entertain some visions too; and, since the reduction of Charleston, look on America as at our feet. We reckon, too, on Spain's desertion of the family compact;—but the junction of their fleets is no capital confirmation. I do know that we have fallen away extremely by living on such airy sustenance. For these three, or four, or five years, we have dined on meals to come, and had little to pick but the bones of provisions we have lost. As I have nothing new to communicate or announce in the political line, I am glad to quit so disagreeable a theme.

I cannot control your ingenious plea against the *ex-post-facto* law that I should wish to establish, on the occasion of a second present that you are sending me—or rather a thousandth present; but I do earnestly beg it may be the last. Mr. Morrice is confined at Paris by the gout, or at least was when I heard of him; so I cannot particularise my thanks yet: though, the more I like what he brings me, the less I shall be able to refrain from scolding you. You deserve that I should serve you as Mrs. Bracegirdle, the vestal actress, treated the old Lord Burlington,[1] with whom he was in love in vain. One day he sent her a present of some fine old china. She told the servant he had made a mistake; that it was true the letter was for her, but the china for his lady, to whom he must carry it. Lord! the Countess was so full of gratitude when her husband came home to dinner! Observe, after the *ex-post-facto* crystal, the next munificence goes to Linton[2] *à la Bracegirdle;* and I do not think I am very modest to begin only then.

I must notify the rupture of our great match, which I announced in my last. Lord Egremont, who proves a most worthless young fellow, and is as weak and irresolute, has behaved with so much neglect and want of attention, that Lady Maria heroically took the resolution of writing to the Duchess, who was in the country, to desire her leave to break off the match. The Duchess, who had disliked the conduct of her future son-in-law, but could not refuse her consent to so advantageous a match, gladly assented; but the foolish boy, by new indiscretion, has drawn universal odium on himself. He instantly published the rupture, but said nothing of

[1] Charles, Earl of Burlington, father of the architect Earl. He died 9th Feb. 1703-4. His wife was Juliana Noel, sole daughter and heir to Henry Noel, of North Luffenham, in Rutlandshire.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] The seat, in Kent, of Sir Horace's nephew.—CUNNINGHAM.

Lady Maria's having been the first to declare off; and thus everybody thinks he broke off the match, and condemns him ten times more than would have been the case if he had told the truth, though he was guilty enough in giving the provocation. We are all charmed with the sense and spirit of my niece, who would not risk so probable a chance of unhappiness, though the fortune was so great, and she could not dislike his person. Still these three charming girls inherit more of their mother's beauty than of her fortune. Each has missed one of the first matches in this country; Lady Laura Lord Carmarthen,[1] Lady Maria Lord Egremont, Lady Horatia the Duke of Ancaster, after each had proposed and been accepted! The fate of young women of quality is hard: in other countries they are shut up till their parents have bargained for, without consulting, them; here they are exposed to the addresses of every coxcomb that has a title or an estate to warrant his impertinence.

The trial of Lord George Gordon is put off till November—I do not know why. Dissatisfaction grows again on the continuance of the camps, and on the numbers of boys that have been executed for the riots; for the bulk of the criminals are so young, that half a dozen schoolmasters might have quashed the insurrection. There does not appear to have been the least connection or concert between the several mobs; nor any motive in them but a sudden impulse of mischief, actuated by the contagion of example and encouraged by the inactivity of all gradations of Government. The Ministers did nothing to prevent or stop the tumult; the justices of peace shrunk; the courts of justice thought of shutting up shops; the House of Lords adjourned, and so did the House of Commons, even after the worst was past. A capital blazing, and held in terror for a week by so contemptible a rabble, will not tell well in story! I pity our future historians, who will find plenty of victories in our gazettes, and scarce anywhere else! Adieu!

[1] Son of the Duke of Leeds [Vol. vi. p. 15, and vol. vii. p. 154]. The marriage was broken off, the Duke not being able to make an adequate provision; Lord Carmarthen having children by his first wife, on whom the whole estate was settled. The Duke of Ancaster died just as the marriage was determined upon. Lady Laura was afterwards married to her first-cousin, Lord Chewton, son of the Earl of Waldegrave.—WALPOLE.

1947. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Aug. 1, 1780.

Your Ladyship's last letter and mine might have curtsied and bowed on the road, for they certainly passed each other; nay, they might have chatted over their own contents, as they were both full of the same subject. I shall not resume it, as you may imagine how thoroughly I must be tired of it. I will only add, that the Duchess, however offended, had antecedently taken such an aversion to her future son-in-law,[1] that she is delighted the match failed; and I will swear that the abandoned is no mourning bride, but far more gay than during his preposterous courtship. Still, I allow they are unfortunate girls to have missed so many splendid marriages as they have been flattered with. They are like the prints of Edward V., and have had coronets hanging over their heads that never lighted on them. They have been with me here since last Friday, and on Monday received a visit that gave them great joy. Their heroic cousin William[2] arrived before any of us came down to breakfast, and I made them keep him to dinner. They could not receive a proposal with more modesty than he did my compliments on his late victory. He has promised to dine with us again to-morrow; but did not forget to desire I would make his compliments to your Ladyship the first time I should write.

Though *our* story has made so much more noise, it is not touching and melancholy like the silent one your Ladyship tells me of poor Mrs. Byng. I remember to have heard at the time that Lord Torrington was the sole cause of his brother's ruin.

I find my materials run so short, that I shall postpone my letter to another post. These last ten days have been totally engrossed by my own family: when once one has told the story, it is not fair to tease others with impertinent collateral circumstances that are important to nobody but the concerned.

[1] The Earl of Egremont.—Cunningham.

[2] The Honourable William Waldegrave, Captain R. N., second son of John, third Earl of Waldegrave, by Lady Elizabeth, fifth daughter of John Lord Gower. Walpole calls him the 'heroic,' as he had, on the 4th of July, after a hard fight, captured and burnt the French frigate 'La Capricieuse.' Captain Waldegrave in this action commanded His Majesty's ship 'La Prudente,' hence the name of William the Prudent.—Cunningham.

Wednesday, 3rd.

William *the Prudent* kept his word, stayed all night, and left us this morning before breakfast. I do not wonder his cousinesses are so fond of him: if he is Mars at sea, he is smooth as a calm at land. He tells us from Navestock that the Parliament is to be dissolved next week, which I find is the general opinion. My nieces leave me to-morrow, and are to be woodland nymphs for the rest of the season. I shall go to Park-place next week for a few days, and perhaps to Nuneham, if the Lord and Lady are there, of which I am not certain; nor shall I, if there is a general election, for I abhor hearing details of elections.

The Countess Cowper is at the point of death with a cancer. This is all the news our region furnishes.

1948. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1780

You have perhaps heard, or at least seen in the papers, enough of the story of my niece Lady Maria and Lord Egremont, not to be surprised at my late silence. The treaty occupied me for some time, and the rupture since. Do not be alarmed; I am not going to suffocate you with the detail. I will only say that she has behaved with a good sense, spirit, and gentleness, that, except the first, surprised me; and she blended the two last with such charming propriety, that nothing but perfection in the first could have united them so gracefully. Her lover is a pitiful object, on whom her merit would have been deplorably thrown away.

You lost nothing by my silence. Though I write now, I have nothing to tell you. The Parliament was, I believe, to have been dissolved to-morrow: if it is not, I suppose it is from no renewal of love between dear friends, but proceeds either from the sailing of the Spanish Fleet, or from fear of bad news from the West Indies, which might squeeze a little lemon into the elections. A leaf of laurel no bigger than one shred of a daisy would give wings to the proclamation that lies ready to fly.

I know no more literary than political news: in short, I know nothing. To-morrow I go to Park-place, and did intend to extend my progress to Nuneham, but Lady Jersey, who is at Richmond with Lady Di Beauclerk, and drank tea here yesterday evening,

told me the Harcourts are to pay their annual visit to Lord Vernon on Thursday. Pray tell me when you are to be at Nuneham; I should like to meet you there. Lady Jersey says the plan of alteration of the house is laid aside; and all I could understand was, that the approach to the house is to be changed; but she is too fine a Lady to explain how that will produce their being better lodged.

You are desired to conclude that I could fill the rest of this page with a collection of phrases, that while they complained of want of matter, would display great ingenuity in spinning a full letter out of inanity, or if you will not be so complaisant, I do not much care. The naked truth is, that I have not a word more to say. If you think I might as well not have written, I think so too; but at least it proves that I thought on you; and it proves, too, that in the most glorious reign in our annals, there was one moment in which one had nothing to commend.

1949. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1780.

No wonder you were charmed with Mount-Edgcumbe, Madam. You have described it justly by saying, *It has the beauties of all other places added to peculiar beauties of its own.* You must have felt, too, for its Lord and Lady, who last year beheld above one hundred ancient oaks growing exactly where they ought, felled to make room for a battery! I was not less pleased with your phrase of the old gentlewoman's *open-armed way of receiving you.* You must have been touched with her cordiality, when you express it so significantly, for you have given a picture in one epithet, that is more pathetic than a description. I have no prospects, no adventures, to send your Ladyship in return. My own little landscape is brown and parched. A sultry east wind has reigned for eight-and-twenty days, and left us neither grass nor leaves. This is the third summer that our climate has been growing as Asiatic as our Government; and the Macphersons and Dalrymples, I suppose, will hail the epoch of the introduction of camels and dromedaries in lieu of flocks of sheep; yet a Russian fleet riding in the Downs is a little drawback on our Ottoman dignity.

Lady Barrymore is not dead, as I told you, Madam, but better. The Parliament too, I hear, is not to be dissolved till next month.

We news-writers cannot always warrant our goods, nor are falsities a discredit to the profession. Paragraphs of news are like roasted chestnuts; not one in twenty is sound. They are like mottoes too, wrapped in sugar, which everybody breaks, finds nothing worth reading, and yet goes on cracking.

I was not so much misinformed about Miss Ingram's match. Lord William is gone to Temple-Newsham, *en famille*, and, they say, Lady Irwin is to pay his debts. I enlarge my qu. instead of effacing it.

It is not decent to trouble His Majesty's postman with such a scrap as this, filled only with recantations and repetitions; and therefore I shall reserve it till the wind changes, when we expect cargoes of novelties, and such victories as nothing but a new Parliament is worthy of hearing.

If the Russian squadron happens, like other folks, to insult Plymouth, I suppose you will go to see it, unless the very names of the commanders terrify you, for they sound as if selected to affront us. What think you, Madam, of Captains Cocuffsoff, Boscarcuff, Huncuff, and Melnicuff? I wish such tremendous appellations do not imprint terror enough to recall the camps into the two Parks! They are at least as terrible as the schoolboys, the black maid, and the servant-girls that have been hanged for obliging both Houses of Parliament to adjourn, and for burning London about the Government's ears.

This morning I made my annual visit to the North, and was received by my lady, with whom I found that superlative jakanapes, Mr. Eden. He flung himself upon the settee, and thence distributed airs of protection, as far as was consistent with giving himself no sort of trouble. The contrast was perfect, Lady North was all humility and civility; the *commis parvenu* seemed to be giving audience.

Friday night, 18*th*.

I dined at Ditton to-day, and though Lord Beauchamp, a great news-merchant, was there, I did not learn a tittle. We have had rain and a west wind, but as it is again turned to the N. E., we must still wait for the fate of the West Indies; but as my letter might be quite stale—no! I think it could not be less interesting, if it lay in my drawer this month—well, it shall go. One cannot be always in the year '59, and have victories fresh and fresh for every post-day. We have camps at home, instead of conquests abroad, and Lady Amherst's assemblies on the parade, in lieu of French

cannon in Hyde Park. I remember an old ironic song of [Dick] Estcourt, with this passage:—

> How with bloody French rags he has litter'd poor Westminster-hall,
> O slovenly John Duke of Marlborough!

Future Scotch historians will have no occasion to decry our present commanders; nor treaties of Utrecht and Paris to refund our conquests! So the present glorious era will, at least, wipe off one national reproach, our woful talent at negotiation. Nobody can say Mr. Eden made a shameful peace.

1950. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday, Aug. 23, 1780.

I WENT to town yesterday, Madam, and arrived just time enough to learn the desolation of Jerusalem. Our whole outward-bound fleets for East and West Indies are taken by the Spaniards, as in a drag-net; though *they* are not reckoned able fishers. Seven companies of General Rainsford's new raised troops for Jamaica, and two of Lord Macleod's, and two Ordnance-ships for the East, are included in this great prize. I could not send you the virgin account in time, for Lord Macartney told me your Ladyship had ordered him to direct his letters to Ampthill, and that you should stop at Bowood. As the waters are so troubled, I conclude your host will resume *his* fishing-tackle. The Parliament, it is now said, will not be dissolved. The pendulum of our council seems to vibrate very irregularly.

In the evening, I went to Dr. Graham's.[1] It is the most impudent puppet-show of imposition I ever saw, and the mountebank himself the dullest of his profession, except that he makes the spectators pay a crown a-piece. We were eighteen. A young officer of the Guards affected humour, and tired me still more. A woman, invisible, warbled to clarinets on the stairs. The decorations are pretty and odd, and the apothecary, who comes up a trap-door, for no purpose, since he might as well come upstairs, is a novelty. The electrical experiments are nothing at all singular, and a poor air-pump, that only bursts a bladder, pieces out the farce. The doctor is like Jenkinson in person, and as flimsy a puppet. I hope his brother, whom Mrs. Macaulay married, is not such a wooden thing on wires.

[1] An indelicate exhibition at Schomberg House in Pall Mall.—CUNNINGHAM.

The Countess Cowper is at last delivered from her misery. She died with consummate courage, and, at the same time, with the weakness of trying to conceal the cause of her death. I have heard no particulars of her Will. I believe she had little to bequeath, nor has given but trifling legacies from her son. This is an important event only in this neighbourhood, and that only as it serves for conversation. If you correspond with a villager, you must, now and then, Madam, take up with our gossipry.

Another on our list of burials is a Sir Patrick Hamilton. His history is curious. He has an estate of 1800*l.* a year in Ireland, but has lodged at Twickenham for three or four years, watching impatiently an ancient uncle, who has some money. The old gentleman, formerly a captain in the Scotch Greys, is now eighty-eight, but as beautiful and sleek as Melchisedec when he was not above two hundred, and he walks four or five miles every day, and looks as if he would outlive his late heir for a quarter of a century more. Sir Patrick was knighted when mayor of Dublin. His lady is still more parsimonious. In his mayoralty, he could not persuade her to buy a new gown. The pride of the Hamiltons surmounted the penury of the Highlands. He bought a silk that cost five-and-fifty shillings a yard, but told his wife it cost but forty. In the evening she displayed it to some of her female acquaintance. "Forty shillings a yard! Lord, Madam," said one of them, "I would give five-and-forty myself." "Would you, Madam? You shall have it at that price."[1] Judge how Sir Patrick was transported, when he returned at night, and she bragged of the good bargain she had made!

Mr. Brown [*Capability*] has shown me his designs for improving Belvoir Castle. They show judgment, and *would be* magnificent. I asked whence the funds were to arise, for I hear the Duke's [Rutland's] exchequer is extremely empty. Sir Sampson Gideon follows him round Cambridgeshire, and discharges the bills his Grace leaves unpaid.

I have been writing letters and soliciting votes for Lord Macartney to be Governor of Madras; and yet can scarce wish to succeed: yet there is merit in not despising twenty thousand a year, in an age when commands over Indian mines and foreign embassies are thought below the acceptance of the beggars at Brookes's.

[1] Here is the original of the story told of Lord and Lady Eldon in Twiss's Life.—CUNNINGHAM.

Friday, 25th.

Lady Hertford has brought me a 'Morning Post,' in which are mighty compliments to *me*—yes, to *me*. This shows the value of praise and abuse, and how judiciously they are dispensed! The Duke of Richmond, the living temple of virtue, is the object of calumny—I of commendation! Yet methinks my principles do not entitle me more to panegyric from a pensioner than the Duke's. It talks, too, of my extensive learning, which always makes me laugh —no mortal's reading has been more superficial.

I heard last night that the Russian fleet only lifted up its leg against us, and is returned; and to-night that Lord Vernon is dead. If I receive no orders to-morrow from your Ladyship, I shall send this to Ampthill. On Monday I shall go for two or three days into Kent to visit Mr. Barrett, and see Knowle again, and some other places.

Saturday.

My lady says nothing; go to Ampthill, letter!

1951. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1780.

The glorious campaigns in the two Parks, and the vengeance inflicted on a parcel of schoolboys and housemaids, who have been executed for performing a rebellion, that was suckled for a week by the whole Legislature, and by the Magistracy of London, are a little obscured already by the entire capture of our East and West Indian Fleets by the Spanish squadron, under the nose of the sentimental Dr. Cumberland. I suppose he will be recalled now like the illustrious Stormont and Eden, as he has executed his mission; for we contrive to send proxies to receive affronts. The first Commissioner of the Admiralty, I suppose, will go to Portsmouth to receive a box of the ear from Captains Huncuff or Crusanuff, who seem selected by Captain Thomas Mackensie, one of the Russian Commanders, to insult us by their very names. He perhaps will be invested *here* like Lord Macleod with *the Polish Star*. Apropos, two companies raised by the latter Laird for the East are taken, and two ships of ordnance, and seven of General Rainsford's companies for Jamaica.

The Parliament, it is said, and believed, will not be dissolved. The reason assigned is, that the voters in the Militia cannot be

spared from the camps to choose a new Standing Army of Parliament-men. I hurry over politics, which makes one's ink blush till it is red ink; yet I have nothing else to tell you. I go on Monday to make Mr. Barrett a visit in Kent,[1] and shall look again at Knowle.

As there is no likelihood of a general election, unless some miraculous victory should drop out of the clouds, I promise myself that you will think of Nuneham in September, where I will certainly meet you, if you give me notice. Sandby has not come near me, nor does even Strawberry furnish a paragraph; yet when I see you, I shall not be so barren as I seem to be, though I have sauntered away the whole summer, but my ears have not lain fallow. Adieu!

1952. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1780.

I HAVE waited for news till I can send you none but bad. The Russian fleet is stalking in our Channel, and our own East and West India outward-bound fleets are gobbled up by the Spanish squadron off Cape Finisterre. This is the heaviest commercial blow we have yet received at once. It is an age since we have heard from America. We attributed the silence to an obstinate east wind that blew for nine-and-twenty days. There have been parentheses of West since, and we expect news every moment, and with anxiety. Thus you see I do not resign my post of your gazetteer, though it is but an irksome office when it is to record our wane. The re-conquest of America, I believe, is less near than you foreigners conjecture, and than has been so confidently foretold at home. All I know is, that we have been gaming for what was our own. When we leave off play, we shall see whether we have won or lost; nay, should we recover our stake, we must compute what it has cost. The card-money has not been cheap.

The Countess Cowper,[2] mother-in-law of your pinchbeck Prince,

[1] Lee Priory, near Canterbury, since better known as the residence of Sir Egerton Brydges. The pictures and curiosities have been sold and dispersed. The two fine and valuable miniatures of Henry the Eighth, and Anne of Cleves, by Holbein, in their original setting of an ivory case, passed into the possession of Sir Samuel Meyrick.—MITFORD.

[2] Georgina, daughter of John Carteret, Earl of Granville, first married to John Spencer, only brother of Charles, Duke of Marlborough, and, secondly, to the second Earl Cowper, to whom she was second wife.—WALPOLE.

is dead of a cancer. Her own son, Lord Spencer, is in a bad state of health. Each gets a jointure by her death.

Mr. Windham, I hear, is at Brussels on his return. I am peevish with him for having looked on you through our ill-humoured foggy eyes. I have almost always been out of luck in my recommendations; but I assure you I do you ample justice, and have always been completely convinced that they have been in fault. Your temper and flowing benevolence for forty years have been always uniform; and it is least of all likely that you should grow sour only to those I interfere for. I know you and my countrymen better. The latter have retained few of their virtues, but I do not find that they have exchanged them for urbanity. Mr. Windham, I believe, is a worthy man, but I wish he had been less morose.

P.S. I have heard this evening, that an account is arrived of Walsingham having joined Rodney, and that the Russian fleet is returned to the Pole. Do not imagine, by this short letter, that, though I do not drop our correspondence, I am curtailing it by degrees. I could lengthen my letter by dwelling on circumstances; but that is not my manner. I seldom even inquire after them. The result of events is all I wish to know and to communicate. How can one wish to learn what one does not wish to remember? The newspapers give you details. I pretend but to skim the current of facts, and to mark what is true for your information. The multiplicity of lies coined every day only perplexes, not instructs. When I send you falsehoods, at least I think or believe them probable at the time, and correct myself afterwards, when I perceive I have been misled. I, who am in no secrets, trust to facts alone, as far as they come to light. Mercy on future historians, whose duty it will be to sift the ashes of all the tales with which the narratives of the present war have been crammed! Some will remain inexplicable. This jaunt of the Russian squadron will be one of the enigmas.

1953. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Aug. 31, 1780.

I HATE to send false news, though about insignificant subjects, as the choice of churchwardens or members of Parliament, and therefore I write a line to tell you the latter is to be dissolved to-morrow.

I returned from Mr. Barrett's last night, which is a prettier place than he had modestly represented. It is like himself, quiet. There

is a small house that is decent, a cheerful vale, an humble stream improved, a few trees of dignity, and ground irregular enough for variety. He has some few good pictures, prints, and books, and indulges himself without extravagance. I saw some other places that I liked less, and revisited Knowle on my return, which disappointed my memory much. But unless you know how vast and venerable I thought I remembered it, I cannot give you the measure of my surprise; but then there was a trapes of a housekeeper, who I suppose was the Baccelli's dresser, and who put me out of humour, and so good night.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Sept. 20, 1780.

After a most bustling and uncomfortable fortnight at York, &c., I am returned hither for a week's quiet. I hope our association will obtain some little grace and favour in your eyes, both for what it has done, and for what it has not done. It has plucked every peacock's feather out of the tail of that strutting carrion crow, Lascelles, and has not sullied the immaculate white plumage of the uncle, of the House of Cavendish.

Are you satisfied? I am sure Lord Rockingham ought to be so; for we have done for him what he would never have dared to do for himself, could he have enjoyed that plenitude of ministerial power which your father, and Mr. Pelham after him, ever enjoyed. An Opposition in the county of York would never have been ventured upon, and yet we have proved its practicability, and have, by a most moderate subscription (not above 14,000*l.*), frightened the Lord Paramount of the West India Islands out of the contest: nothing was ever a more complete victory, and nothing ever more easily obtained.

But while I am boasting in this manner, do not think that from this event I augur any substantial good to this miserable country. If elections in general go as ill in the other counties as they have done in Yorkshire, the next parliament will be, if possible, worse than the last. *Parlons d'autres choses.*

I find here a letter from my friend Mr. Gilpin (whose drawings you once saw in my hands and admired). Some years ago he published a pretty little book, which he called an 'Essay on Prints,' and which has passed through two editions, and is now in the press for a third. He tells me, "he has an inclination to inscribe it to you, if I think it will be well taken, and not considered in any little low pecuniary view;" and adds, "that if I think so I must send him your proper address, and that he wishes to do it merely from regard to your taste and genius." I shall venture to answer this in the affirmative, as I am sure his address will contain nothing fulsome, and because I am also sure you neither can nor ought to take such a compliment in ill part from so plain and honest a man as Mr. Gilpin is.

I long prodigiously for authentic Windsor Anecdotes, and from the hand of the author of the 'Anecdotes on Painting,' who can paint them in their proper colours, black and all black; but I believe they will require still blacker colouring than black, and, as Hamlet says, a suit of sables. I return to York again on Monday, merely to join the train of my friend Mr. Duncombe, whom I have been intimate with from early youth. I shall return at the end of the week, and shall then begin to prepare for an expedition to Nuneham, where I shall hope to meet you. The good lord of that place made me a visit here in my absence, from Mr. Sedley's near Nottingham, and waited for me ineffectually three days: a plague on politics, say I, that have robbed me of his company.

Yours most truly,
W. Mason.

1954. TO THE EARL OF OSSORY

MY DEAR LORD; *Berkeley Square, Aug.* 31, 1780.

As I told Lady Ossory in my last that the Parliament was *not* to be dissolved, I write one line to contradict myself; for, though you are in no danger, I hate to give false intelligence. It is to be dissolved to-morrow.

I returned from Kent last night, and am going to Strawberry as fast as I can, to avoid hearing of elections. When the Russian fleet was candidate for the Downs, and the Court dared to set up nobody against it, it is not worth inquiring about petty boroughs. I should as soon care about what passes at a vestry. When we are quite prostrate, I suppose we shall have *the* member of Parliament, as there is still *the* senator at Rome. Yours most, &c.

H. W.

1955. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1780.

THERE have been twenty cross purposes, Madam, and I have been a sufferer by them all. Lord Macartney told me your Ladyship had ordered him to direct to Ampthill; accordingly so did I. Then you stayed in the west, and I went into Kent. You directed your letter to me here, and here it waited for me, and here I found it to-day, and learn that you are to be in town to-day in a new house still in Grosvenor-place, for you move no farther than a pawn. I am as sorry for poor Mrs. Crayle as George Selwyn was for poor Mrs. Crawfurd whom he had never seen; and a good deal more sorry for his muscular pains, but do not at all interest myself about his election, nor any other body's election, while nobody will interest himself about any thing else for these six weeks. I heard as I passed through the town that the Parliament was to be dissolved—a curious moment to be sure—but I suppose it is a measure to make the whole nation drunk, lest it should be afraid of the French and Spanish fleets! or regret the two that we have lost! It is certainly wise to lay ourselves open to every kind of attack, for every one that is missed counts for a victory on our side. We should not be half so glad of the arrival of the ships from the Levant, if we had not lost those that were going to the East and

West. This sort of wisdom must captivate *me*, it is so like my own. I believe I have told your Ladyship that I reckon it is five to one better for me that my hay should be spoiled than not, because, as I have five cows and but one horse, the cows will eat bad hay and the horse will not. However, you may be sure I admire the verses and perfectly agree with them: the Ministers are full good enough for the people. You may depend, Madam, on my neither showing nor naming; not only from fidelity, but because coarser dainties than pearls are good enough for swine.

I have not been capering at balls in the torrid zone like your Ladyship's neighbourhood, but I have been jolting over stony roads in the midst of Africa; at least I thought so, though in the heart of Kent. I have seen nothing very charming, and little new. One place struck me much, but more from recollection of old passages than from any curiosity in itself. This was Deane [in Kent], a *triste* old seat of the Oxendens, now deserted; but it was long the residence of Sir George, who in my very youth was the fine gentleman of the age,[1] extremely handsome, a speaker in Parliament, a Lord of the Treasury, very ambitious, and a particular favourite of my father—till he became so of my sister-in-law.[2] That, and a worse story,[3] blasted all his prospects and buried him in retirement—

> For when a courtier's out of place,
> The country shelters his disgrace.

Portraits of him, and some heroines of the time—now totally forgotten, but fresh in my memory, seemed a waking vision. It was like Æneas's meeting Dido in the shades. I could not have conceived that scenes in which I was not in the least interested, could have made so strong an impression; yet they really affected me as if I were beginning the world again. I could not shake off the sensations till I came to Knowle; and that was a medley of various feelings!—Elizabeth and Burleigh, and Buckhurst; and then Charles and Anne, Dorset and Pembroke, and Sir Edw. Sackville;

[1] There is a half-length of him, and another of his wife, a Dunch, at Kimbolton Castle, the seat of the Duke of Manchester. He was, as Walpole says, extremely handsome.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Margaret Rolle, Countess of Orford.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] His seduction of his wife's sister, Bell Dunch, or Mrs. Thompson, the subject of an Elegy by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. There is a pretty miniature of Mrs. Thompson at Kimbolton Castle, and in the muniment room there the deed of separation from her husband, on account of her seduction by Sir George. The deed is dated 17th June, 1732. (See Lord Wharncliffe's 'Lady Mary,' vol. ii. p. 196, and vol. iii. p. 409.)—CUNNINGHAM.

and then a more engaging Dorset, and Villiers,[1] and Prior; and then the old Duke[2] and Duchess, and Lady Betty Germaine, and the Court of George II.!

The place is stripped of its beeches and honours, and has neither beauty nor prospects. The house, extensive as it is, seemed dwindled to the front of a college, and has the silence and solitude of one. It wants the cohorts of retainers, and the bustling jollity of the old nobility, to disperse the gloom. I worship all its faded splendour, and enjoy its preservation; and could have wandered over it for hours with satisfaction; but there was such a heterogeneous housekeeper as poisoned all my enthusiasm. She was more like one of Mrs. St. John's Abigails, than an inhabitant of a venerable mansion; and shuffled about in slippers, and seemed to *admire* how I could care about the pictures of such old *frights* as covered the walls!

When the coast is clear, and your elections over and gone drunk to bed, I shall be very happy, Madam, to wait on you at Ampthill. I have been better for these three months than in the last five years; and, though I do not allow myself to draw notes upon futurity, I like to employ my moments of health to the best advantage. Those I gladly give to the few I love—sickness and pain one should keep to one's self.

[1] Duke of Buckingham,—the duke of Dryden and Pope.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Lionel, first Duke, son of 'the more engaging Dorset.' . . . "In the Sackville family, a son of talents had frequently succeeded a father below mediocrity. The following epigram, founded on that circumstance, was ascribed to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, but never acknowledged by him, or included in the manuscript copy of his Poems. The last stanza was unjust, as well as severe; but there is so much arch humour in the first that it is worth preserving:

Folly and Sense in Dorset's race
Alternately do run;
As Carey one day told his Grace,
Praising his eldest son.

But Carey must allow for once
Exception to his rule;
For Middlesex is but a dunce,
Though Dorset be a fool.

Lord Holland. (Walpole's George II. vol. i. p. 509, Ed. 4to.)—CUNNINGHAM.

1956. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 2, 1780.

Your Lordship, I am sure, will forgive my troubling you so soon to inquire how Lady Harcourt does since her late loss. I have seen such charming instances of her Ladyship's filial tenderness, that I cannot but be anxious for her on this melancholy occasion.

I have been unfortunately disappointed of the great pleasure of waiting on your Lordship, as you gave me leave to do. My journey to Malvern was prevented by the strange story of Lady Maria; and when that and its consequences were quite over, and I was literally setting out in two days to Park-place, and intended to proceed to Nuneham, Lady Jersey, whom I met at Lady Di. Beauclerk's at Richmond, and told so, said "You will not find them, for they go on the 10th to Lord Vernon's"—this was on the 8th, and as soon as I was at liberty to stir.

As I have not been willingly neglectful of the honour your Lordship and Lady Harcourt did me, I shall be very happy if you will still allow me to pay my duty to you, when the elections are a little subsided. I do not mean that I am engaged in any, but on the contrary dread falling foul of them. Do not imagine, my dear Lord, that I suppose you fling open your cellars to Doctors of Divinity or give gin to Alma Maters, or cram Bishop Butler till he is still more willing to strangle you before you are half roasted in Smithfield. You neither expect to cleanse Augeas' stable, nor to drench his grooms, but I had rather stay quietly here, till the drunken riots are over even on the road, and if any part of October will not be inconvenient to you, I shall be happy to look once more at Nuneham, though I beseech you not to accept my homage if it will in the least interfere with any of your engagements, as I never can be less than I am

Your Lordship's most devoted,
Humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

1957. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1780.

I AM very happy at receiving a letter from your Lordship this moment, as I thought it very long since we had corresponded, but am afraid of being troublesome, when I have not the excuse of thanking you, or something worth telling you, which in truth is not the case at present. No soul, whether interested or not, but deafens one about elections. I always detested them, even when in Parliament; and when I lived a good deal at White's, preferred hearing of Newmarket to elections; for the former, being uttered in a language I did not understand, did not engage my attention; but as they talked of elections in *English*, I could not help knowing what they said. It does surprise me, I own, that people can choose to stuff their heads with details and circumstances, of which in six weeks they will never hear or think more. The weather till now has been the chief topic of conversation. Of late it has been the third very hot summer; but refreshed by so little rain, that the banks of the Thames have been and are, I believe, like those of the Manzanares. The night before last we had some good showers, and to-day a thick fog has dissolved in some as thin as gauze. Still I am not quite sorry to enjoy the weather of adust climates without their tempests and insects. Lady Cowper I lately visited, and but lately; if what I hear is true, I shall be a gainer, for they talk of Lord Duncannon having her house at Richmond: like your Lordship, I confess I was surprised at his choice. I know nothing to the prejudice of the young lady;[1] but I should not have selected, for so gentle and very amiable a man, a sister of the empress of fashion,[2] nor a daughter of the goddess of wisdom.[3]

They talk of great dissatisfactions in the fleet. Geary and Barrington are certainly retired. It looks, if this deplorable war should continue, as if all our commanders by sea and land were to be disgraced or disgusted.

[1] In the following November, Lord Duncannon married Henrietta-Frances, second daughter of John, first Earl Spencer.—WRIGHT.

[2] Georgiana, eldest daughter of John, first Earl Spencer; married, in 1774, to the Duke of Devonshire.—WRIGHT.

[3] Margaret-Georgiana, daughter of the Right Hon. Stephen Poyntz; married, in 1755, to John, first Earl Spencer.—WRIGHT.

The people here have christened Mr. Shirley's new house, *Spite-hall.*[1] It is dismal to think that one may live to seventy-seven, and go out of the world doing as ill-natured an act as possible! When I am reduced to detail the gazette of Twickenham, I had better release your Lordship; but either way it is from the utmost attention and respect for your Lordship and Lady Strafford, as I am ever most devotedly and gratefully yours.

1958. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Sept. 12, 1780.

When the Bedfordshire election is over, and Lady Spencer has been chaired at St. Alban's, I shall be ready to steal to Ampthill, Madam; but would not for the mines of Golconda find myself in the midst of one of those combustions: I should be, according to the incomparable and picturesque simile, like a dog in a dancing school. I was like anything still more awkward and confused last week. Coming out of Lady Di.'s in the dark, I missed my way and pitched headlong down a perpendicular bank into a brick pavement laced with orange tubs and flower-pots, broke two of the latter to powder, and yet only bruised my hand and slightly hurt my hip. Had I weighed more than gossamer I must have been dashed to pieces.

Your Ladyship has been very charitable to Mr. Byng; but what must Lord Torrington feel, if he has any feeling, to know his brother eats the bread he has from a Minister whom the elder always opposed! This, I should think, would wound one to the quick.

Admiral Keppel is thrown out at Windsor; but, though all the royal bakers, and brewers, and butchers, voted against him, you must not imagine it was by mandate, whatever Ramus the Page[2] might say; for his Majesty himself told the Admiral that he hoped he would carry his election: how saucy in his own servants to thwart his wishes! I know nothing at all worth writing: of all dull letters, a short one is the best.

[1] Because built (it was said) on purpose to intercept a view of the Thames from his opposite neighbour. [See Letter to Conway, 21st August, 1778].—Berry.

[2] The Billy Ramus of King George III. and Peter Pindar.—Cunningham

1959. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Sept. 19, 1780.

As I think you do not suspect me of neglect when I have anything worth telling you, you will perceive that there are periods when it takes a good deal of time to form events—a whole campaign may not produce two. At other seasons the market is over-stocked; or, after a glut, there is a scarcity. The dissolution of the Parliament could not surprise you, it had been so announced. Your nephew, I see by the papers, is re-elected. I have no other intelligence; and of all articles of news, those on elections are the last I seek. I know as little what the fleets are doing; or where they are, doing nothing. One thing I do discern, that the approaching recovery of America is about as near as the Millennium. Prophecy will sink as low as fortune-telling: no gipsy is less to be credited than our predicting politicians, who, for these last five or six years, have been cruelly brought to shame on the conquests they have announced. By their bubbles the nation are almost stripped of their last shilling, like the dupes who hunt after the philosopher's stone. America is now like the Holy Land; none but bigots and madmen will think of subduing it: nor does the tone of resumption much become us, who are not in the ascending scale.

Admiral Keppel has been thrown out at Windsor, and, it is pretended, by the personal veto of the first inhabitant of the Castle: the consequence already has been that the counties of Surrey and Suffolk solicited the honour of electing the Admiral, who has accepted the offer from the former.

Seven new barons are made: Earl Talbot, that the peerage may descend to his daughter's[1] children; Sir William De Grey,[2] late Chief Justice; Lord Gage, turned into an English peer; General Fitzroy;[2] Mr. Brudenel;[2] Mr. Herbert;[2] and Sir William Bagot. There have been some shiftings of places of the second rate, and some promotions, but none of consequence.

This is literally the sum total of my knowledge; as I have such a fair field of paper lying before me, you may be sure I would

[1] Lady Cecil Rice, wife of George Rice; on her father's death she became Baroness of Dinevor.—WALPOLE.

[2] Sir W. De Grey was created Lord Walsingham, General Fitzroy Lord Southampton, and Mr. Herbert Lord Porchester. James Brudenel, made Lord Brudenel was next brother of George Duke of Montagu, and Earl of Cardigan.—WALPOLE.

embroider it if I had wherewithal. However, I have less scruple in sending such a scrap, as I must write to you again soon, for I hear Mr. Morrice is arrived in England. Where he is, I cannot tell, but I trust I shall see or hear from him soon; and then I am as certain of having cause to thank you—which, by the way, I do *d'avance:* but, though my gratitude will always last, you are to remember that it is never to receive any additional fund.

1960. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 23, 1780.

Though I care so little about elections, Madam, (because I have such a contempt for the aggregate when it is assembled,) I feel for the vexation your civil war produces, and will produce to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory; and take it as a mark of your persuasion of the interest I must adopt in all your affairs, that you are so good as to communicate the detail. I hope you will triumph at least; which is very consolatory, when one has no more than the disappointment of antagonists to lament. You will be so glad to see your house empty for a day or two, and have the empty bottles removed, that I will not encumber you the only moment you can breathe. Indeed I could not well, for I have advertised my long-delayed last volume of 'Painters,' to come out, and must be in town to distribute it. I seized this opportunity to publish it, because I was sure nobody would think of it or me, and that it will have a favourable chance for being taken no notice of. It is a debt I owed, and I will take care to incur no more. My cousin and namesake[1] is come into Parliament, which baptizes me *the old H. W.*—and then one must not play the fool. Charles Fox, I have just heard, has beaten Lord Lincoln from the hustings, of which I am very glad. George Selwyn has been here for a moment, this morning, on the road from *his* defeat. I did not quite enjoy him, as his errand was to give a glimpse of my house to the Signorina and the official Signora Madre, and he would point out twenty things to them of which they had no more conception than of the Apocalypse; yet he entertained me with some of his calamities; they hanged him in effigy, and dressed up a figure of Mimie, and pinned on its breast these words, alluding to the gallows, "This is what I told you, you

[1] Honourable Horatio Walpole, M. P. for the Walpole constituency of King's Lynn.—Cunningham.

would come to." From Gloucester, he went to Luggershall, where he was received by ringing of bells, and bonfires—"Being driven out of my capital," said he, "and coming into that country of turnips, where I was adored, I seemed to be arrived in my Hanoverian dominions." *This* paid for the burden of the governess and child! There are other folks who would feel more comfortable among their turnips just now, than in their castle, having been treated on the terrace with the sight of crape-cockades inscribed, "For Admiral Keppel."—If *Ich Dien* does not wear one, he at least, I hear, *boudes* those who voted against the Admiral—so, victories may be bought too dear!

I am trembling at every letter I receive from Paris. My dear old friend [Madame du Deffand], I fear, is going! The last, which was on Tuesday, had left her at the twentieth day of a fever. To have struggled for twenty days at eighty-four shows such stamina that I have not totally lost hopes; but yet that letter was worse than the three preceding, which had much flattered me. It will be a grievous loss; but when one is old one's self, one cannot have many such misfortunes.

Miss Wrottesley's[1] 5000*l.* will purchase a princely turnippery; but I doubt even that nor a baron will indemnify her for the capital she quits—and yet, 5000*l.* will soon, I believe, buy a principality in England.

1961. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 24, 1780.

I CONGRATULATE you on your success, and rejoice in it more from the aspect of the blossoms of virtue than from any expectation of fruits: and yet I am persuaded that if brought to maturity, it must be by Temper, and not by being forced in hot-beds. Violence, especially in opposition, neither lasts, nor produces lasting benefits. The enormous deviations of late from the Constitution will never be corrected permanently by contrary extremes; and to induce the nation to labour its restitution, it must be convinced that the necessary medicines tend to bring back the habit of body that can be proved to have bestowed the most vigorous state of happiness. Novelties of which the effects are to be experimental and uncertain, will never unite a variety of minds in one system. I am not

[1] Mentioned before [p. 420] as the Duchess of Bedford's niece. Dorothea.—R. VERNON SMITH.

bigoted to the specific mode of the old Constitution because old; nor think it absolutely perfect; but all experience teaches us, that a mass of people will be so bigoted, and will sooner be allured by names than by reasonings. Their enemies too will be strengthened by preaching up the loveliness of the very Constitution they have violated, if deviations from it are recommended as remedies.

I could say still much more against violence, but that seems unnecessary. The episode of Lord George Gordon proved I was not mistaken. It was at the eve of frightening all the world into a *demand* of military government. I go farther: it is my opinion that the deepest schemers of absolute power long for insurrections: and if I do not refine too much, I think I can descry that wish in the total neglect of all prevention of the late riots; these are but the outlines of my thoughts *on one side*. We shall perhaps agree better in those *on the other*, where I discern as many defects, as I observe voluntary errors in those they oppose. The result of both is despair; I foresee nothing but ruin, composed of various calamities. My time of life makes me fly to that ungenerous comfort of paltry old men—what does it signify to me who am going out of the world?

One chapter in all this folio of follies does astonish me—I mean the conduct of France and Spain. They congregate all Europe against us to have the childish satisfaction of smutting our face! say if you please, for the postponed malice of destroying us in detail; but is that a stroke of policy, when they might crush us at a blow? I am tempted to suspect our Ministers of being Machiavels. They seem indeed to have no object but of undoing their own country; but are they not rather occupied in swaying the Cabinets of Versailles and Madrid, and confounding their plans? Was not it Agathocles, who when besieged in Syracuse, invaded Carthage?

Like you, I willingly turn from politics, of which I am heartily sick, to pleasanter themes.

My humility is so predominant that I am afraid of pushing it to affectation: upon my conscience, I had rather waive the distinction your friend Mr. Gilpin is willing to pay me. Any interested view he cannot have, for I have neither wealth nor credit, and, were it not presumption, would add, never *will* have either. But it is solemnly true that I have so mean an opinion of myself that I know not how to consent to any honour. Genius I absolutely have not—taste if you please—for of that I should be no more vain than of personal beauty; but I have so much littleness in my mind, such a want of virtue, that any praise to my understanding makes me

cast my eyes inwards with contrition and disgust. Would not an idol of mud blush if it could, at seeing itself crowned with laurel!—Having made my confession to you, my confessor, do what you please, but save me from compliments, and from *Honourables*—there I am proud, not humble. I am thoroughly convinced that that wretched ray of an Earldom procured me half my little fame. Things I have published without my name, though not worse than their baptized brethren, have perished in their merited obscurity. I can smile at it, but at least it makes me set no value on my literary reputation. It is not derogating from these professions that I am on the point of publishing my last volume of 'Painters.' On the contrary, I have fixed on this moment as the most favourable to the little notice I desire should be taken of it.

I will certainly meet you at Nuneham. Tell me precisely when you will be there. You will not see me happy—I am not now: I dread every day receiving an account of the death of my dear old friend, Madame du Deffand. The last letter from Paris left me small hopes. Adieu!

Yours most cordially,
H. W.

1962. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1780.

I REJOICE in your triumph, Madam, though I cannot partake of your fireworks. Not only had I ordered my books to be advertised, but I have a more melancholy cause that detains me. The letters that I have received to-day from Paris, bid me be prepared to receive an account of my dear old friend's death. I knew she had been very ill, but till these two last posts, I had been flattered that she was recovering. To-day her own secretary, and Mr. T. Walpole, pronounced that there are no hopes. I had sent James's powder, and had begged my cousin, if possible, to obtain her trying it—but alas! I knew France too well, and physicians too, and THEIR physicians still more, to have much hope of its being given; but it is too shocking to be told that the physician has laid aside all medicines, and yet would not suffer her to take it! When is it best to try it but in despair? and when, if not at eighty-four? He said, it would vomit her, and kill her. Is not he killing her himself by trying nothing? and by not trying the powder in that case? This is a horrible thought, though she could not be immortal; and

the terror I have been under for some time of her becoming deaf, added to blindness, had made me more reconciled to her great age, and to the probability of losing her. She retains, that is, did retain her senses, did not suffer, knew her situation, and was perfectly tranquil, and spoke little; but, by the whole description, she appears to me to have been almost worn out. I tremble for the next letter—though it is just as if I had already received it.—Another friend gone! I scarce have one left of above my own age. It is these memorandums, that at the same time reconcile one to one's own departure. What can one expect but to survive one's friends if one lives long?—In this unhappy mood, Madam, I should be bad company. Can I care about elections? If an opponent's death could set Mr. Burke to moralising on the hustings, at Bristol, how must the loss of so dear a friend affect me! The savage physician exasperates me; what transport should I have felt, if I could have saved her, though but for six months! Perhaps I could not—I will not be unjust; it is probable that I should not—but oh! not to let me try! It augments my abhorrence of physicians and professions. Long ago I said that the Devil's three names Satan, Lucifer, and Beelzebub, were given to him in his three capacities of President of Priests, Lawyers, and Physicians. I repeat it now with rancour: Beelzebub and Bouvard are synonymous terms in my lexicon. Five years ago I loved the wretch, for he saved her, as I thought, in my presence—did that give him a right over her life? Has not he cancelled my gratitude? Can one love and hate at once? I would if I could—yes, I do thank him for prolonging her life for five years—but oh! professions, professions! how *l'esprit du corps* absorbs all feelings!—and how prejudiced becomes principle! Dear old woman! she is now, I fear, no more!—I can write no more, Madam, for I can write on no other subject, and have no right to torment you with my concern. You shall hear no more of it. Nature takes care that hopeless griefs should not be permanent, and I have seen so much affectation of lamentation where little was felt, and I know so well that I have often felt most where I have discovered least, that I will profane my affection to my lost friend with no ostentation—much less to those who never knew her. I live enough in solitude to indulge all my sensations, without troubling others.

P.S. Since I wrote my letter I have had another shock,—General Conway has broken his arm! Lady Aylesbury assures me there is

as little bad as there can be in such an accident, and that I shall hear again to-morrow. Still I shall go to him on Friday.

1963. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1780.

I MUST inquire how you do after all your electioneering agitations, which have growled even around your hermitage. Candidates and their emissaries are like Pope's authors,

> They pierce our thickets, through our groves they glide.

However, I have barred my doors; and when I would not go to an election for myself, I would not for any one else.

Has not a third real summer, and so very dry one, assisted your complaints? I have been remarkably well, and better than for these five years. Would I could say the same of all my friends—but, alas! I expect every day to hear that I have lost my dear old friend Madame du Deffand.[1] She was indeed near eighty-four, but retained all her interior faculties—two days ago the letters from Paris forbade all hopes. So I reckon myself dead as to France, where I have kept up no other connection.

I am going at last to publish my fourth volume of 'Painters,' which, though printed so long, I have literally treated by Horace's

[1] In the last letter Madame du Deffand ever wrote to Walpole, dated the 22nd of August, she thus describes her situation :—" Je vous mandai dans ma dernière que je ne me portais pas bien; c'est encore pis aujourd'hui. Je suis d'une foiblesse et d'un abattement excessifs; ma voix est éteinte, je ne puis me soutenir sur mes jambes, je ne puis me donner aucun mouvement, j'ai le cœur enveloppé, j'ai de la peine à croire que cet état ne m'annonce une fin prochaine. Je n'ai pas la force d'en être effrayée; et, ne vous devant revoir de ma vie, je na rien à regretter. Divertissez-vous, mon ami, le plus que vous pourrez; ne vous affligez point de mon état; nous étions presque perdus l'un pour l'autre; nous ne nous devions jamais revoir; vous me regretterez, parce qu'on est bien-aise de se savoir aimé. Peut-être que par la suite Wiart vous mandera de mes nouvelles; c'est une fatigue pour moi de dicter." From this day she kept her bed. On the 8th of September Mr. Walpole had written to her, expressing his great anxiety for her. To his inquiries she was unable to dictate an answer. Her ante-room continued every day crowded with the persons who had before surrounded her supper-table. Her weakness became excessive; but she suffered no pain, and possessed her memory, understanding, and ideas till within the last eight days of her existence, when a lethargic insensibility took place, which terminated in death, without effort or struggle, on the 24th of September. She was buried, according to her own direction, in the plainest manner, in her parish church of St. Sulpice. To Mr. Walpole she bequeathed the whole of her manuscripts, papers, letters, and books, of every description, with a permission to the Prince of Beauvau to take a copy of any of the papers he might desire.—WRIGHT.

rule, "Nonumque prematur in annum." Tell me how I shall send it to you.

1964. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 3, 1780.

I DID not go to Malvern, and therefore cannot certify you, my good Sir, whether Tom Hearne mistook stone for brass or not, though I dare to say your criticism is just.

My book, if I can possibly, shall go to the inn to-morrow, or next day at least. You will find a great deal of rubbish in it, with all your partiality—but I shall have done with it.

I cannot thank you enough for your goodness about your notes that you promised Mr. Grose; but I cannot possibly be less generous and less disinterested, nor can by any means be the cause of your breaking your word. In short, I insist on your sending your notes to him—and as to my 'Life of Mr. Baker,' if it is known to exist, nobody can make me produce it sooner than I please, nor at all if I do not please; so pray send your accounts, and leave me to be stout with our antiquaries, or curious. I shall not satisfy the latter, and don't care a straw for the former.

The Master of Pembroke (who he is, I don't know,[1]) is like the lover who said,

> Have I not seen thee where thou hast not been?

I have been in Kent with Mr. Barrett, but was not at Ramsgate; the Master, going thither, perhaps saw me. It is a mistake not worth rectifying. I have no time for more, being in the midst of the delivery of my books.

1965. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[2]

Berkeley Square, Oct. 3, 1780.

I HAVE had but too melancholy excuses, my dear Lord, for not having yet paid my duty to you. For these three weeks I have been alarmed, and been expecting the death of my dear old friend Madame du Deffand. I have had no letter from Paris this week,

[1] Dr. James Brown.—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

and fear it is over. In the midst of this distress I was shocked with an account of General Conway having broken his arm; too true, though he is in the fairest way possible. Before these misfortunes, I had settled with my bookseller to publish my last volume of the 'Anecdotes of Painting,' and had calculated I should be returned from Nuneham before the publication, which, having been advertised for the ninth, I must perform. This will make it impossible for me to wait on your Lordship before the beginning of next week, when I shall make Mr. Conway another visit, whom I had time to stay with but one night since his accident. I flatter myself I shall not interfere with any of your Lordship's or Lady Harcourt's plans, in which case you would forbid the homage of your Lordship's most devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. I will bring the volume with me, that you may not have the trouble of sending for it.

1966. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 4, 1780.

I HAVE received your packet by Mr. Sutherland, and am delighted with its contents. Your news would be much the best part, but I doubt is not so far advanced as to expect sudden effect. The History of the House of Medici will be welcome indeed. I see one has but to form wishes early, and live long enough, and they will all be fulfilled. The *Famiglia estinta*[1] made me smile. If that condition brings one acquainted with their true story, it would not make one very zealous for successors in some foreign royal families; for instance, I should not pray for issue to the Great-Duke of Russia. I beg you will subscribe for three sets for me and two of my friends. I should like to have *carta cerulea;* not because it is the dearest, but because I do not know what it is, and therefore conclude, like the vulgar, that it is something mighty fine. I hope no soul that has interest to stop it, will get an inkling of the work.

[1] It was written by Galluzzi, from authentic papers furnished by the Austrian Grand-Duke Leopold; who said that, as the House of Medici was extinct, there was no reason for not writing their true story. This History was published in 1781, after the death of the Empress-Queen, whose prejudices would probably have prevented it, had she known of her son's intention, as it is not at all favourable to the Court of Rome.—WALPOLE.

Your ring I have not yet received, though Mr. Morrice is arrived. Indeed, displeased as I was at your superabundant kindness in sending it, I am now afraid I shall never possess it. All my disinterestedness could not resist dunning Mr. Morrice; and, behold, he has sent me word that by some *mal-entendu* it was packed up in his heavy baggage, which, by another, is still at Margate! Oh! how can one flatter one's self that a ring in a bottle of heavy baggage will ever be found! or, rather, will not be found and stolen by some custom-house officer! Mr. Morrice was a fine person to trust a gem to! I suppose he would have stuffed a lady's picture for her lover into a jack-boot!

General Dalrymple is arrived from Sir Henry Clinton, with heavy baggage indeed, full of bad news! The Gazette has produced only samples strewed over with fine sugar, to make it as palatable and little bitter as possible; but the sum total is, that of adieu to America! All the visions that mounted in fumes into our heads from the capture of Charleston are turned to smoke; and it were well if it would rest there. To be cured of that dream would be no calamity; but I wish we may have no collateral losses! I fear we ache in some islands, and are not quite without twitches on the continent of America. Well! as I was right in foreseeing some miserable issue from the American war, I have a mind to try my skill in foretelling peace. 'Tis sure I wish it most fervently.

Last week I was alarmed with a calamity nearer to my heart than politics. General Conway broke his arm by a fall. But I have been with him, and he is in the most favourable way possible, and has not had the smallest degree of fever.

You must reckon this short letter the second part of my last, which was short too; or as the beginning of my next, for, if ever I get my ring, I shall certainly write again to thank you, though I should have nothing else to say. I could have made this longer, but I do not like to entertain every foreign post-office with what they would not dislike.

1967. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 7, 1780.

Part the second behold already—for I have received the gem, which from ignorance I called a ring, and beg its pardon: it is much too large for so little an appellation, and is most beautiful too,

and of exquisite sculpture. All this makes matters worse, for the finer it is, the more I am ashamed; and therefore cannot thank you half so much as it deserves. Yet I will be very grateful, upon condition of its never having a successor. You must tell me what the connoisseurs have baptized it. Is it an Apollo or an Amazon? A handsome young god and a heroine approach so much to the boundaries of the sexes, that they are not easily discriminated in so small an area. Mr. Morrice has fairly excused his delay. After he had put to sea, they apprehended a privateer; on which he sent back his baggage to Ostend, and with it his most valuable treasures. My gem has escaped all these perils, and arrived like the lost sheep. You cannot imagine how the Caligula, and the Bianca Capello, and Benvenuto's coffer, and the Castiglione, and all your presents, embraced and hugged it, and inquired after you. The new-comer is lodged in a glass case in *my Tribune*, over against Caligula.[1]

As I wrote to you but two days ago—nay, my letter would leave London but to-night,—I have no news to add: however, I may have, for this will not go hence till Tuesday morning, to be ready for that night's mail. But I was so impatient to tell you the cameo is safe, and that your munificence is not thrown away *entirely*, that I could not help beginning my letter now, though the rest of my paper must depend on the charity of accident and events: and, if they will not assist it, I do not care,—go it shall; I will not owe you a moment's gratitude that I can pay. Nay, I will heap coals of fire on my own head; for all your gifts shall be entered in the printed catalogue of my collection as your presents,—and then whoever reads it will cry, "Why, had he no shame!"—Oh, yes, a vast deal; and this is one of his ways of doing penance.

Oct. 9th.

Since I wrote the above, I have heard from Paris of the death of my dear old friend Madame du Deffand, whom I went so often thither to see. It was not quite unexpected, and was softened by her great age, eighty-four, which forbad distant hopes; and, by what I dreaded more than her death, her increasing deafness, which, had it become, like her blindness, total, would have been living after death. Her memory only *began* to impair; her amazing sense and quickness, not at all. I have written to her once a week for these last fifteen years, as correspondence and conversation could be her only pleasures. You see that I am the most faithful letter-writer in the

[1] Mann's present, an intaglio on cornelian of Apollo, sold at the Strawberry Hill sale for 5*l.* 5*s.*—CUNNINGHAM.

world—and, alas! never see those I am so constant to! One is forbidden common-place reflections on these misfortunes, because they *are* common-place; but is not that, because they are natural? But your never having known that dear old woman is a better reason for not making you the butt of my concern.

Lord George Gordon has just got a neighbour—I believe, not a companion; for state-prisoners are not allowed to be very sociable. Laurens, lately President of the Congress, has been taken by a natural son of the last Lord Albemarle, and brought to England, to London, to the Tower. He was going Ambassador to Holland, and his papers are captured too. I should think they would tell us but what we learnt a fortnight ago; and (which is more wonderful, what we would not believe *till* a fortnight ago) that there is an end of our American dream! Perhaps they will give us back a cranny in exchange for their negotiator.

I go again to-morrow to see General Conway, and hope to find him out of bed; and I finish my letter, that I may not run into meditations on what is uppermost in my mind,—mortality and its accidents!

At night.

I have just heard some news that you will like to hear, and which will make you hold up your head again a little *vis-à-vis de M. de Barbantane.* An express arrived to-day from Lord Cornwallis, who with two thousand men has attacked General Gates in Carolina at the head of seven thousand, and entirely defeated him, killed nine hundred, and taken one thousand prisoners; and there has since been a little codicil, of all which you will see the particulars in the to-morrow's 'Gazette.'—But it is very late, and this must go to town early in the morning. I allow you to triumph, though Gates is my godson, and your namesake.

1968. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Park Place, Oct. 10, *at midnight,* 1780.

I SIT down after the family are gone to bed to answer your Ladyship's letter which I received this morning as I was getting into my postchaise; and to-morrow I go to Nuneham; a visit I could not refuse as it is but sixteen miles off, and that I have not been there these two years: otherwise I am in no mood to seek or to contribute to amusement.

You did me justice, Madam, in imputing my silence to my unhappiness. My dear old friend is gone! I had been told to expect it; but the contrary wind kept me twelve days in anxious misery! and I could not help having moments of hope—now they are all destroyed. Mr. Conway's accident, too, though he is in the fairest way possible, did not diminish my concern; my spirits are so naturally good that I know they will recover without efforts; yet frequent losses of friends remind one of the discomforts of old age; but one should not attrist those who are at a distance from the precipice.

I have not heard Lady Charlotte Finch's *bon-mot*, nor anything else till last night, when I learnt Lord Cornwallis's victory from those most concerned. I passed the evening with Lady Hertford at Mrs. Keene's. Lord and Lady North were there, *en cour plénière*, with Miss, the Queen Mother Drake, Mr. Williams, and Brydone, the Sicilian traveller, who having wriggled himself into Bushy[1] will, I suppose, soon be an envoy, like so many other Scots. As Lord North's poppies had been just jerked with sprigs of laurel, he was very good company, and my partner at cribbage. He has just been in Somersetshire, and let a house to a woman who petitioned for a piece more of land as her tenement had no backside. I said he had certainly not sold her a *good bargain*. This suited his humour, and he told us several more good stories. I say nothing of the victory over my godson. It is all in the 'Gazette,' and I suppose more. 'Tis sufficient to make us relapse into our American frenzy, which the last cargo of bad news had cooled. The conqueror talks of severity to the late renegades; he forgets his own protest on the Stamp Act, or perhaps chooses to wash it out with blood.

Lady Surrey is not only confined, but for some time was tied down in her bed. She now walks about the house, but sometimes herself asks for the strait waistcoat.

The Duchess of Gloucester is certainly not going abroad, to my knowledge; at least the Duke is amazingly recovered by the sea air and looks, they tell me, remarkably well.

I believe these are answers to all your Ladyship's questions, except on Lady Granard's match. I did not know it or her. The last query is very kind; Boughton and Drayton I have seen, and Kirby I should like to see, but you will be returned, and the season gone, before I could reach Farming Woods. At present I will wish you good night, Madam, after thanking you again for your kindness

[1] Lord North's house.—CUNNINGHAM.

about my poor lost friend! her not having taken James's powder adds to my sorrow, and I cannot forget it, but I have promised to say no more on that terrible subject.

1969. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Nuneham, Oct. 18, 1780.

I AM heartily vexed at my disappointment: I have not only not found you here, but find you will not come till I am gone. I begged you to tell me your motions, but heard not a word of you. I delayed and delayed till it grew too late in the year for me to venture being from home lest the gout should arrive. It is more provoking that you have been flinging away your time on a turnpike meeting, a certain way to be sure to overthrow despotism! I should like to see a letter from Brutus to Cassius, telling him that he hoped to stab Cæsar to the heart by setting aside a tool of the tyrant, whom he intended to make surveyor of the Appian Way. If Horace had been in a plot, I should tell him, were I Cassius, that he would have been better employed in writing a satire on ——. I have forgotten all my Roman history, and so I will suppose some instance that would answer to Johnson's Billingsgate on Milton, or Soame Jenyns's Ode on Horace and Virgil. In short and in plain English, you, that have no business but with immortality, are squabbling in vestries, or in elections that signify no more than vestries—are wrapping up a matchless talent in the coarse rubber of a country tavern. Prythee leave England to its folly, to its ruin, to the Scotch. They have reduced it to a skeleton, and the bones will stick in their own throats; you will find nothing but Io Pæans on Lord Cornwallis. The Court has lost some elections, but who are come in but banditti —whom they will buy the first week they come to town?

I have left with Lord Harcourt for you my new old last volume of 'Painters.' You need not turn it over, for there is not a syllable you have not seen but the short Preface, and shorter Dedication. By the latter you see I do not court popularity.

If you have a mind to be very obliging after disappointing me so much, you will make four posts more and come to Strawberry; if you do not, I hope Bishop Hurd will be Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal, Mr. Smelt *intendant de la province de York*, and Dr. Johnson licenser of the press, *de par le Roi;* and then I hope you will have a mind to write again, and get nobody to print it.

P.S. This place [Nuneham] is more Elysian than ever, the river [the Thames] full to the brim, and the church by one touch of Albano's pencil is become a temple, and a principal feature of one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

1970. TO CHARLES BEDFORD, ESQ.[1]

DEAR SIR: *Strawberry Hill, Oct.* 18, 1780.

I AM most exceedingly concerned at the melancholy account I have received of yourself and your family, and pity you from my heart. I wish anything I could say could give you ease and comfort, or any thing I could do could relieve your anxiety—but in such afflictions we must submit to the will of God, who I fervently hope will spare those you so deservedly love. You must act like a man bear your misfortunes with courage and patience, and take care of yourself for the sake of the rest, if any should be taken from you. I hope your tenderness and fears have made you think the danger greater than it is.

Do not think of ceremony with me, who certainly do not expect it; nor, oppressed as you are, write yourself; but let Mr. Harris send me exact accounts. I shall be anxious to hear again, but positively will not have you write yourself. Remember, I enjoin this. I never can doubt of your attention to me, and like best that you should show it now, by complying with what I desire. It will give me sincere joy to receive a better account, as I am

Most cordially yours,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1971. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 1, 1780.

I HAVE suspected, for some time, Madam, that I am growing superannuated, and now I am sure of it, for I don't know what I say. I certainly did not, if I told your Ladyship that I was going to Nuneham for a *fortnight*. I meant to stay but two nights, and literally did stay but three; and the reason I gave you, not having been there in two years, was the worst reason I had to give, another proof of dotage; for besides the visit to Lord and Lady Harcourt,

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

to whom I certainly have great obligations, my journey comprehended two visits (going and coming) to Mr. Conway, who still kept his bed; and moreover I was to meet Mr. Mason at Nuneham. All this is not an excuse of myself, but an accusation. Your Ladyship's is not quite so just. You know I offered myself at Ampthill first, and your election, and then your immediate removal to Farming Woods, prevented my paying my first duty to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory; and when I pleaded a debt to Lord Harcourt, I did and could mean nothing but the specific moment in which I was to go to him. Different fits of illness, and close confinement have interrupted several intended journeys to Ampthill; and all last year I was literally not out of my own house once, no, not once,—I mean, not to sleep anywhere else. I certainly am better at present than I have been these five years, and, if it continues, will indubitably wait on you; it shall certainly be the first visit I will pay any where.

As I have been returned above a fortnight I should have written had I had a syllable to tell you; but what could I tell you from that melancholy and very small circle at Twickenham Park, almost the only place I do go to in the country, partly out of charity, and partly as I have scarce any other society left which I prefer to it; for, without entering on too melancholy a detail, recollect, Madam, that I have outlived most of those to whom I was habituated, Lady Hervey, Lady Suffolk, Lady Blandford—my dear old friend [Madame du Deffand], I should probably never have seen again—yet that is a deeper loss, indeed! She has left me all her MSS.—a compact between us—in one word I had, at her earnest request, consented to accept them, on condition she should leave me nothing else. She had, indeed, intended to leave me her little all, but I declared I would never set foot in Paris again (this was ten years ago) if she did not engage to retract that destination. To satisfy her, I at last agreed to accept her papers, and one thin gold box with the portrait of her dog. I have written to beg her dog itself, which is so cross, that I am sure nobody else would treat it well; and I have ordered her own servant who read all letters to her to pick out all the letters of living persons, and restore them to the several writers without my seeing them.

Were I vain-glorious, to be sure I might have boasted of passing a second evening with Lord and Lady North—nay, at their own palace. Perhaps you will think I am going to be swaddled in ermine in my dotage like old Brudenel; but be assured, Madam,

that I do not design to have robes and a coronet laid on my death-bed like Lord Hunsdon.

I came to town on Sunday to pay my duty to the Duke of Gloucester, who, however, did not arrive till last night. I never saw him look so well and so robust. He returns on Saturday to stay till after Christmas: so shall I, but for only two or three days, as all my few acquaintance have left my neighbourhood, and as I do not think it prudent, at this critical time of the year, for me to be much in the country. I may be in a busy scene here for aught I know, but I take care to have no business with it. Another phœnix, just like its predecessor, is risen from the ashes of the last Parliament; and I suppose will have the final honour of consuming its own nest. Lord Ossory, I conclude, is arrived, and will tell you particulars of which I am informed only by the newspapers.

George [Selwyn] I have seen in his paternal mansion, and drank tea with him and his adopted babe and its governess, and Mr. Storer. He goes every night at nine to the new Irish Queen's *couchée*.[1]

Your 'Barbary traveller' is probably an ape of Mr. Bruce, and hopes to lie himself unto 7000*l*. I can sooner believe that savages eat living beef-steaks than that they imitate our pitiful European vice of insincerity. The impulse of nature may make us knock out the brains of an enemy; but it must be long-tutored, and civilised, and polished, and refined, before we sell our country and posterity for a mess of potage.

As your Ladyship has long had the bulk of my book, my last volume (and *last* volume it shall be), it was not worth while to send it to you for the addition of two or three pages; but since you desirè it, if I am so lucky as to see Lord Ossory, he shall have it.

1972. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 1, 1780.

I own I was heartily vexed at your not letting me know when you would be at Nuneham, that I might have contrived to meet you there, but what you have sent me would wash out any stain—*all the perfumes of Arabia do sweeten your little hand, the grey goose quill that is therein* (for, as Millamant says, I am very fond of the

[1] That is, to Lady Carlisle's. Lord Carlisle was made this year Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.—Cunningham.

poets to-day) *in his heart's blood is wet.* When you write *so* you may let the world want the rest of your blank verse and leave me to be

He who ere while the happy gardens sung.

Yes, I am solicitous about your immortal fame, and care about little else. Tully's last works buoyed up when all his patriot endeavours sunk in the common shore of his country. This country is as lost as his, and nothing can save it. Do you want a new instance? Dr. Hunter, that Scotch nightman, had the impudence t'other day to pour out at his Anatomic lecture a more outrageous Smeltiad than Smelt himself, and imputed all our disgraces and ruin to the Opposition. Burke was present, and said he had heard of Political Arithmetic, but never before of Political Anatomy, yet for a Scot to dare thus in the heart of London, and be borne, is proof enough that the nation itself is lost beyond redemption. The new Parliament, as I foresaw it would be, is exactly what the last was. Do you require a proof of that too, besides the same standing majority? Here is one: Rigby, who exactly this time twelvemonth tried to betray and blow up the Administration, was yesterday its drawcansir, and I hope you allow he at least can descry the better of the lay. Charles Fox indeed told Lord George Germaine that he was a coward as he had always been, and was stabbing in the dark; yet surely that was unjust: Mr. Adam and Mr. Fullarton attempted to stab in open daylight—we are above *détours.*

I know no news but that the Prince of Wales is to have a bit of an establishment; yet his court is still to be kept in the nursery. However, there will be a little more room; for the right reverend Father in God, Prince Frederic [Duke of York], is to be weaned and sent abroad.

His holiness the Archbishop had much ado last night to christen Prince Alfred. I wonder, as every body is equally fit for every thing, that they did not make the pontiff and the wet-nurse change offices. Sir John Mordaunt's red ribbon is to be given to Rodney, and not to Lord Cornwallis—I suppose because not crimson enough for him. There! I am glad I have got through the chapter of politics; here is something better[1]:—

When Macreth served in Arthur's crew,
He said to Rumbold "Black my shoe,"

[1] See vol. vi. p. 119.—CUNNINGHAM.

To which he answer'd "Ay, Bob."
But when return'd from India's land,
And grown too proud to brook command,
He sternly answer'd, "Nay, Bob."

I am told this is at least three years old, no matter; good ink like wine is not the worse for age.

I wish you had told me, if you did not find Nuneham in more beauty than ever. I do not know the Paradise on earth I prefer to it, with its Adam and Eve; who may comfort themselves with having no children, when they recollect that the first-born committed murder *with the jaw-bone of an Ass*, a deadly weapon I am sure!

Quaker or not I do object to my valuable *researches:* I never searched anywhere but in foolish books, and for no end but to divert myself. It is such folk as Dr. Milles that *research;* and when they have tumbled out of their depth, call their fall—elucidations. I never pretended to any thing; I never did any thing that signified, and I will not subscribe to compliments, which would look as if I liked them. Yet I do not pretend to be humble, nor to dislike flattery; but then I choose to flatter myself—for that is the only flattery that is ever severe. I do not ask when you will come to town, for then perhaps you will tell me.

With duty to Miss Fauquier. How I delight to see her

Throw her broad black exterminating eye,
And crush some new gilt courtier's loyal lie.

P.S. I am reading L'Abbé Richard's 'Voyage d'Italie,' in six volumes. He pretends to give an account of the History and Governments of the several States, and though it is heavy, it is not bad; but one passage diverted me, speaking of Piperno the Privernum of the Volsci, he mentions Camilla as a parishioner there, and says, "L'Histoire de cette belle guerriere (in Virgil) merite d'être lue." There is a *research* for you. In the eighteenth century we can cite Virgil for true story, as Caxton did three hundred years ago.

1973. TO SIR HORACE MANN

Berkeley Square, Nov. 2, 1780.

If the word *New Parliament* did not impose a sort of duty on me —at least, if you would not expect it,—I think I should scarce write to you yet, for I have nothing to tell you but that *il ne valoit*

pas la peine de changer. There are several new members, but no novelty in style or totality of votes. The Court may have what number it chooses to buy. It has nominated a new Speaker, Mr. Cornwall. Sir Fletcher, who never haggles with shame, published his own disgrace, and declared he had been laid aside without notice. Courts do not always punish their own profligacies so justly.

There is no new public event at home or from abroad. The Spanish negotiation does not seem to advance at all. Prince Frederic, the Bishop, is going to Germany; and then the Prince of Wales is to have something of a family.

Our old acquaintance Lord Pomfret, whose madness has lain dormant for some time, is broken out again; I mean, his madness is. He went down to Euston last week, and challenged the Duke of Grafton for an affront offered to him, he said, when the Duke was Minister—you know what an age ago that was. The Duke declared his innocence, and advised him to consider on it. He did for two days; then said he was now cool, yet insisted on satisfaction. The Duke gave both letters to a magistrate, and then swore the peace against him; the only rational thing to be done. The Earl some years ago had many of these flippancies, and used to call out gentlemen in the playhouse, who he pretended had made faces at him. As madmen are generally cunning and malicious, it was generally such as looked unlikely to resent, whom he picked out. Once he unluckily selected General Moyston, and, drawing his curtains early in the morning, bade him rise and follow him into Hyde Park, for having laughed at him at Court. Moyston denied having even seen him there. "Oh, then, it is very well," said my Lord. "No, by God, is not it," replied the General; "you have disturbed me when I had been in bed but three hours, and now *you* shall give *me* satisfaction:" but the Earl begged to be excused. There was a Mr. Palmes Robinson, who used to say publicly that he had often got Lord Pomfret as far as Hyde Park Corner, but never could get him any farther.

Mr. Windham I have seen. He is wonderfully recovered, and looks robust again. He said ten thousand fine things in your praise. Oh! thought I; but said nothing. Mr. Morrice I have not yet seen: he is confined in the country by the gout, and I hear looks dreadfully.

I have seen lately in the Abbé Richard's 'Voyage d'Italie,' written in 1762, that in the Palais Pitti were preserved two large

volumes of the 'Travels of Cosimo III.,' with views of the houses he had been at; and he names England amongst them, where he certainly was. Could you find out if there is such a thing, and get a sight of it? I should be very curious to know what English seats are there. Old English mansions are great objects with me—but do not give yourself much trouble about this request.

3rd.

You perceive that I am not likely to have great Parliamentary news to tell you. This week they are only being sworn in. The first debate in the Commons was to be next Monday, but probably will not, for last night Lord North was very ill of a fever. They can no more go on without their Treasurer, than without their pensions. Sir Horace the second, I take for granted, will tell you of the common debates. I do not mean to relax myself, but seldom know much of their details, which I think of little consequence; and rather reserve myself for confirming or contradicting reports of considerable events.

1974. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 11, 1780.

I AM afraid you are not well, my good Sir; for you are so obligingly punctual, that I think you would have acknowledged the receipt of my last volume, if you were not out of order.

Lord Dacre lent me the new edition of Mr. Gough's 'Topography,' and the ancient maps and quantity of additions tempted me to buy it. I have not gone through much above half of the first volume, and find it more entertaining than the first edition. This is no partiality; for I think he seems rather disposed, though civilly, to find cavils with me. Indeed, in the passage in which I am most mentioned, he not only gives a very confused, but quite a wrong account; as in other places, he records some trifles in my possession not worth recording—but I know that we antiquaries are but too apt to think, that whatever has had the honour of entering our ears, is worthy of being laid before the eyes of everybody else. The story I mean is p. xi. of the Preface. Now the three volumes of drawings and tombs, by Mr. Lethueillier and Sir Charles Frederick, for which Mr. Gough says I refused two hundred pounds, and are now Lord Bute's, are not Lord Bute's, but mine, and for which I never was offered two hundred pounds, and for which I gave sixty

pounds—full enough. The circumstances were much more entertaining than Mr. G.'s perplexed account. Bishop Lyttelton told me Sir Charles Frederick complained of Mr. L.'s not bequeathing them to him, as he had been a joint labourer with him; and that Sir Charles wished I would not bid against him for them, as they were to be sold by auction. I said this was a very reasonable request, and that I was ready to oblige Sir Charles; but as I heard others meant to bid high for the books, I should wish to know how far he would go, and that I would not oppose him; but should the books exceed the price Sir Charles was willing to give, I should like to be at liberty to bid for them against others. However, added I, as Sir Charles (who lived then in Berkeley Square, as I did then in Arlington Street) passes by my door every time he goes to the House of Commons, if he will call on me, we will make such agreement.

You will scarce believe the sequel. The dignity of Sir Charles Frederick was hurt that I should propose his making me the first visit, though to serve himself—nothing could be more out of my imagination than the ceremonial of visits; though when he was so simple as to make a point of it, I could not see how in any light I was called on to make the first visit—and so the treaty ended; and so I bought the books. There was another work, I think in two volumes, which was their Diary of their Tour, with a few slight views. Bishop Lyttelton proposed them to me, and engaged to get them for me from Mr. Lethueillier's sister for ten guineas. She hesitated, the Bishop died, I thought no more of them, and they may be what Lord Bute has. There is another assertion in Mr. Gough, which I can authentically contradict. He says Sir Matthew Decker first introduced ananas, p. 134. My very curious picture of Rose, the royal gardener, presenting the first ananas to Charles II. proves the culture here earlier by several years.

At page 373, he seems to doubt my assertion of Gravelot's making drawings of tombs in Gloucestershire, because he never met with any engravings from them. I took my account from Vertue, who certainly knew what he said. I bought at Vertue's own sale some of Gravelot's drawings of our regal monuments, which Vertue engraved: but, which is stronger, Mr. Gough himself a few pages after, viz., in p. 387, mentions Gravelot's drawing of Tewkesbury church; which being in Gloucestershire, Mr. G. might have believed me that Gravelot did draw in that county. This is a little like Mr. Masters's being angry with me for taking liberties with bishops

and chancellors, and then abusing grossly one who had been both bishop and chancellor. I forgot that in the note on Sir Charles Frederick, Mr. Gough calls Mr. Worseley, Wortley. In page 354, he says Rooker exhibited a drawing of Waltham-cross to the Royal Academy of Sciences—pray where is that Academy? I suppose he means that of Painting. I find a few omissions; one very comical; he says Penshurst was celebrated by Ben Jonson, and seems totally in the dark as to how much more fame it owes to Waller. We antiquaries are a little apt to get laughed at for knowing what everybody has forgotten, and for being ignorant of what every child knows. Do not tell him of these things, for I do not wish to vex him. I hope I was mistaken, and shall hear that you are well. Yours ever.

1975. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 16, 1780.

It will, I am sensible, Madam, look like paying your Ladyship for your compliments, and that will look like swallowing them greedily; and yet I must instantly tell you how very much I am charmed with, and applaud your letter to Mr. Stonhewer. I cannot select such apt words as your own; it was *noble, simple, genuine.* Those epithets belong to handsome actions, not to trifling writings. I do not know what the House of Lords will do; nor have I heard that they know yet. They have appointed a committee on the affair.

Mr. Fitzpatrick's last reply to Adam was excellent; but methinks the man on the white horse in the Revelations, whose name, I think, was Death, is gone forth! I am sorry it is *a white horse.* That did not use to be the colour on which revenge rode; but everything is so confounded now, that one does not know a white horse from a white rose.

A good courtier, yesterday, sang the praises to me of that atrocious villain, Arnold, who, he said, till he heard of André's execution, would not discover the persons at New York, with whom Washington was in secret correspondence; then indeed he did. Only think of the monster! I hope he will be a Privy Councillor! betraying to Sir Harry Clinton, in the height of his indignation for André, the wretched poor souls cooped up in New York, who are guilty of that correspondence. When I expressed my horror at such bloody

treachery, and said I did not doubt but Lord Cornwallis's savage executions had hurried on André's fate, and were, besides cruel, indiscreet; the same apologist said, "Oh! we have more prisoners of theirs than they have of ours." How tender to their *own friends*, who they do not care if hanged, provided they can spill more buckets of blood! I know nothing of poor André; he is much commended, but so he would be if as black as Arnold.

I am far from guessing why Mr. Sherlock does not write in his own language, unless it is for the reason your Ladyship so luckily guesses. I should think everybody in this age could write best in his own. Formerly, before the Babel of languages that overwhelmed the Latin were settled into some idiom, folks wrote better in the tongue of the Romans than they could in their own hodge-podge; but that is no longer the case. Mr. Sherlock's Italian is ten times worse than his French, and more bald. He by no means wants parts, but a good deal more judgment.

I am not got abroad again yet, but think I shall in two or three days: nor have I heard anything new, or more than I tell you; except its being said now that Lord George Gordon will not be tried this term.

1976. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 20, 1780.

As I apprised you that the new Parliament did not promise to be very active, you will account for my having told you none of its proceedings. It has been more confined to personalities than divisions. The latter have proved much in favour of the Court: but then some of the chiefs of the Opposition have in a manner seceded, not from their party, but from action; and less from change than from disagreement. Lord Pomfret, after a week's imprisonment in the Tower, made his submission, has been reprimanded, and released on giving his honour (a madman's honour!) not to repeat his offence. The grand jury have found the bill of high treason against his fellow-prisoner Lord George Gordon, who, however, will not be tried till after Christmas. I do not know why.—So much for Parliament.

The newspapers have told you as much as I know of Arnold's treachery, which has already cost the life of a much better man, Major André—precipitated probably by Lord Cornwallis's cruelty.

You hear, on the Continent, but too much of our barbarity; the only way in which we have yet shown our power! Rodney found Rhode Island so strongly fortified that he returned to the West Indies; and yet we still presume on recovering America!

Do you wonder that, witness to so much delusion and disgrace, it should grow irksome to me to be the annalist of our follies and march to ruin? I cannot, like our newspapers, falsify every event, and coin prophecies out of bad omens. My friendship for you makes me persist in our correspondence; but tenderness for my country makes me abhor detailing its errors, and regard to truth will not allow me to assert what I do not believe. I wait for events, that I may send you something; and yet my accounts are dry and brief, because I confine myself to avowed facts, without comments or credulity. My society is grown very narrow, and it is natural at sixty-three not to concern myself in the private history of those that might be my grandchildren. Even their sallies become less splendid as opulence is vanished; and, though national follies forerun and contribute to the decline of a great country, they stop with it, not from repentance, but impotence. 'Tis insolent power that tramples on laws and morals. Poverty is only vicious by imitation, or refractory from oppression. Robbery, indeed, continues at high-water mark, though the army and navy have drawn off such hosts of outlaws and vagrants. That they have successors, proves the increase of want.

22*nd.*

There was an odd interlude yesterday in the House of Commons. Some of the Opposition proposed to thank the late Speaker, Sir Fletcher. Lord North had promised not to gainsay it. Neither side could admire such a worthless fellow: those he has left, less than those that have adopted him; and yet the vote of thanks passed by a majority of forty:—and so one may be thanked for being a rogue on all sides! If thanks grow cheaper, they will at least be more striking when bestowed on the worthy; for every one will say, "Such an one *does* deserve praise."

It looks a little as if we should quarrel downright with the Dutch. I do not wonder that we mind so little an enemy more or less; for, numerous as our foes are, they certainly are very awkward. We hurt ourselves a thousand times more than they do. We have done nothing that signifies a straw; but they have done less.

1977. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 24, 1780.

I AM sorry I was so much in the right in guessing you had been ill, but at our age there is little sagacity in such divination. In my present holidays from the gout, I have a little rheumatism, or some of those accompaniments.

I have made several more notes to the new Topography, but none of consequence enough to transcribe. It is well it is a book only for the adept, or the scorners would often laugh. Mr. Gough, speaking of some Cross that has been removed, says, there is now *an unmeaning market-house* in its place. Saving his reverence and our prejudices, I doubt there is a good deal more *meaning* in a market-house than in a cross. They tell me that there are numberless mistakes. Mr. Pennant, whom I saw yesterday, says so. *He* is not one of our plodders; rather the other extreme. His *corporat* spirits (for I cannot call them animal) do not allow him time to digest anything. He gave a round jump from ornithology to antiquity; and, as if they had any relation, thought he understood everything that lay between them. These adventures divert me who am got on shore, and find how sweet it is to look back on those who are toiling in deep waters, whether in ships, or cock-boats, or on old rotten planks. I am sorry for the Dean of Exeter [Milles]; if he dies, I conclude the leaden mace of the Antiquarian Society will be given to Judge Barrington,[1]

Et simili frondescet Virga metallo.

I endeavoured to give our antiquaries a little wrench towards taste—but it was in vain. Sandby and our engravers have lent them a great deal—but there it stops. Captain Grose's Dissertations are as dull and silly as if they were written for the Ostrogoth maps of the beginning of the new Topography; and which are so square and so incomprehensible, that they look as if they were ichnographies of the New Jerusalem. I am delighted with having done with the

[1] The Hon. Daines Barrington (died 1801), fourth son of John first Viscount Barrington, second Justice of Chester, and author of "Observations on the Statutes," &c. Walpole laughed at his paper on Dolly Pentreath, the old woman of Mousehole (supposed to have been the last who spoke the Cornish language), and so did Peter Pindar.—CUNNINGHAM.

professions of author and printer, and intend to be most comfortably lazy, I was going to say idle (but that would not be new), for the rest of my days.

If there was a peace, I would build my Offices—if there is not soon, we shall be bankrupt—nay, I do not know what may happen as it is.—Well! Mr. Grose will have plenty of ruins to engrave! The Royal Academy will make a fine mass, with what remains of old Somerset-house.

Adieu! my good Sir. Let me know you are well. You want nothing else, for you can always amuse yourself, and do not let the foolish world disturb you. Yours most sincerely.

1978. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Sunday, Nov. 26, 1780.

My aches are not so mighty, Madam, as to merit your obliging inquiry after them; they come and go, and are rather omens of crippletude than positive evils. One should not mention marks of decay as illness, for is there a remedy for old age? I do not condemn Medea, who knew there was no other than chopping her father into cutlets. Miss Vernon's disorder is of consequence; beauty and youth should be tended; I am sure she will want no attention at Ampthill.

I may totter as much as I please; I believe the dowagers on either hand of me have a very different idea of me; at least if they keep watch and ward at their windows, as dowagers sometimes do. Two mornings ago they might have seen me receive, first, Dr. Hunter, and a moment after, Lady Craven—a man-midwife and so pretty a woman are very creditable; and yet, alas! he came to talk to me about Greek medals, and she of a new comedy she is writing.

A still odder thing happened at night: I asked Lady Bute who this Prince Callimanco is (for so I am sure the mob will call him) who is coming from Naples. "Lord," said she, "don't you know? Why, he is the favourite of the Queen of Naples." "That I should have thought," said I, "would rather be a reason for his *not* coming." "Oh," said she, "I suppose she is tired of him." Should one have expected, that of all living beings *that* would have been a topic for Lord Bute's wife to have tapped! The same night, at Lady Holdernesse's, I saw Lady Grantham:[1] as she is not *my* wife, I really

[1] Lady Mary Grey, daughter of the Marchioness Grey and Earl of Hardwicke, married in August of this year, to Robinson Lord Grantham. This is both court and county (Bedfordshire) news to Lady Ossory.—Cunningham.

I will now trust you with a secret, but beg Mr. Gough may not know it, for he will print it directly. Though I forgot Alma Mater, I have not forgotten my Almæ Nutrices, wet or dry,—I mean Eton and King's. I have laid aside for them, and left them in my Will, as complete a set as I could, of all I have printed. A few I did give them at first; but I have for neither a perfect set of the 'Anecdotes,' I mean not the two first volumes. I should be much obliged to you, if, without naming me, you could inform yourself if I did send to King's those two first volumes—I believe not.

I will now explain what I said above of Mr. Gough. He has learnt, I suppose from my Engravers, that I have had some views of Strawberry-hill engraved. Slap-dash, down it went, and he has even specified each view in his second volume. This curiosity is a little impertinent; but he has made me some amends by a new blunder, for he says they are engraved for a second edition of my Catalogue. Now I have certainly printed but one edition, for which the prints are designed. He says truly, that I printed but a few for use; consequently, I by no means wished the whole world should know it; but he is very silly, and so I will say no more about him. Dr. Lort called yesterday, and asked if I had any message for you; but I had written too lately.

Mr. Pennant has been, as I think I told you, in town: by this time I conclude he is, as Lady Townley says of fifty pounds, all over the kingdom. When Dr. Lort returns, I shall be very glad to read your transcript of Wolsey's 'Letters;' *for*, in your hand, I *can* read them. I will not have them but by some very safe conveyance, and will return them with equal care.

I can have no objection to Robin Masters being woodenhead of the Antiquarian Society; but, I suppose, he is not dignified enough for them. I should prefer the Judge [Barrington] too, because a coif makes him more like an old woman, and I reckon that Society the midwives of superannuated miscarriages. I am grieved for the return of your head-aches—I doubt you write too much. Yours most sincerely.

P.S. It will be civil to tell Dr. Farmer that I do not know whether I can obey his commands; but that I will if I can. As to a distinguished place, I beg not to be preferred to much better authors; nay, the more conspicuous, the more likely to be stolen for the reasons I have given you, of there being few complete sets, and true collectors are mighty apt to steal.

1980. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 5, 1780.

I HAVE the best of all excuses, Madam, and that which a saint might make, for not having mentioned the pictures of Hogarth at Bristol,[1] of which Lord Shelburne is so good as to inform me. I should have specified if I had known of them, because, being in a church, they are considerable enough: otherwise, I confined myself to his pictures that were not portraits, the latter being too numerous; and to the prints from his works for the use of collectors. I am much flattered by Lord Shelburne's approbation, though I am sorry he gives himself time to read such idle books; and I am obliged by your Ladyship's haste to acquaint me with my omission; though, I assure you, I shall not be pressed to repair it, as it will be long, I believe, before there is occasion for a new edition. I printed six hundred to supply the purchasers of the two editions of the former volumes. Not above a quarter are sold yet, and I have no right to settle in my bookseller's shop; one should only pass through it, or not go thither. I remember a story of poor Dr. Chapman, one of Dr. Middleton's antagonists, but I have so entirely forgotten his works that I shall tell it very lamely. He went to his bookseller, and asked how his last work had sold? "Very indifferently, indeed, Sir." "Ay! why how many are gone off?" "Only five, Sir!" "Alack! and how many of my 'Eusebius' (I think it was) have you left?" "Two hundred, Sir!" "Indeed! well, but my book on (I don't know what), how many have you of them?" "Oh! the whole impression, Sir!" "Good now! good now! that is much!" "Well! Mr. —, I cannot help it; I do my duty, and satisfy my conscience."

I will write on; not being so conscientious as Dr. Chapman, I shall accept or take my quietus; but as we are only among ourselves, I will tell your Ladyship another old story *à propos* to Lord Shelburne's reading idle books.

After Sir Paul Methuen had quitted Court, the late Queen [Queen Caroline], who thought she had that foolish talent of playing off people, frequently saw him when she dined abroad

[1] Three pictures for an altar-piece for St. Mary Redcliff Church, Bristol.—CUNNINGHAM.

during the King's absences at Hanover. Once that she dined with my mother at Chelsea, Sir Paul was there as usual. People that play off others, generally harp on the same string. The Queen's constant topic for teasing Sir Paul was his passion for romances, and he was weary of it, and not in good humour with her. "Well, Sir Paul, what romance are you reading now?" "None, Madam! I have gone through them all." "Well! what are you reading then?" "I am got into a very foolish study, Madam; the history of the Kings and Queens of England." Perhaps Lord Shelburne thinks romances as wise a study.

I know nothing of yesterday's debate more than you will see in the papers, Madam; nor of anything else; no, not the title of Lady Craven's play, which, not being quite born, perhaps is not christened.

When you write to Lady Warwick, I wish your Ladyship would persuade her (with her Earl's leave) to bring to town a most curious book, which I once looked over in his father's time. It is a folio, by one John Thorpe, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., and contains many ground-plans and a few uprights of several goodly mansions of those days, of some of which John Thorpe was the architect.[1] This is not mere personal curiosity: I have found in my notes that in that book is a plan of *the old house* at Ampthill, altered by John Thorpe. I want to see whether that Ampthill is your Ampthill or Houghton. It is a pity the book is not engraved: being only lines it would not cost much, indeed many persons would be glad to subscribe for it. As Mr. Charles Greville is a *savio*, I marvel he does not promote it. Did I ever tell you, Madam, that Elizabeth Duchess of Exeter, sister of our Harry IV., and her second husband, Sir J. Cornwall Lord Fanhope, lived at Ampthill, and he died there? Their portraits in painted glass were in the church, whence there is a pretty print in Sandford's 'Genealogic History of the Kings of England;' but I dare to say that I have told you this before, *et que voila de ma radoterie*,—it is a proof at least that I dote on Ampthill.

[1] This valuable volume is now in the Soane Museum. Of the principal elevations engravings have been made by Richardson.—CUNNINGHAM.

1981. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 11, 1780.

WHETHER you are glad or sorry, or neither, my Lady, the Empress-Queen is dead,[1] and Miss Bingham [Lord Lucan's daughter] is to succeed her. Oh! no, I mistake; the latter is only to be Lady Althorp at present; but I believe another Empress-Queen will feel her crown totter a little by this match. It was declared at Devonshire-house on Saturday after the Opera, and the Emperor—stay, I mean Admiral Darby—was to beat Monsieur D'Estaing yesterday, and everybody was in such spirits on these three great events, for the Emperor is to march directly into Lorraine, and Lord Spencer is to convoy—Lord bless me, I heard so much of all those matters, that I do nothing but confound them, and don't know one from t'other, so I will say no more on them.

I saw Madame la Baronne last night at Madame de Welderen's, ay, and the Baron, too; he is well enough, and she looked very well.

I know nothing else upon earth or water, but I have sent your Ladyship enough to spread upon many slices of conversation, and that is the great use of letters in the country.

1982. TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE.

Dec. 11, 1780.

I SHOULD have been shamefully ungrateful, Sir, if I could ever forget all the favours I have received from you, and had omitted any mark of respect to you that it was in my power to show. Indeed, what you are so good as to thank me for was a poor trifle, but it was all I had or shall have of the kind. It was imperfect too, as some painters of name have died since it was printed, which was nine years ago. They will be added with your kind notices, should I live, which is not probable, to see a new edition wanted. Sixty-three years, and a great deal of illness, are too speaking mementos not to be attended to; and when the public has been more indulgent than one had any right to expect, it is not decent to load it with one's dotage!

[1] Maria Theresa, Empress of Germany, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, &c., died at Vienna, 29 Nov., 1780.—CUNNINGHAM.

I believe, Sir, that I may have been over-candid to Hogarth, and that his spirit and youth and talent may have hurried him into more real caricatures than I specified; yet he certainly restrained his bent that way pretty early. Charteris[1] I have seen; but though some years older than you, Sir, I cannot say I have at all a perfect idea of him: nor did I ever hear the curious anecdote you tell me of the banker and my father. I was much better acquainted with Archbishop Blackburne.[2] He lived within two doors of my father in Downing-street, and took much notice of me when I was near man. It is not to be ungrateful and asperse him, but to amuse you, if I give you some account of him from what I remember. He was perfectly a fine gentleman to the last, to eighty-four; his favourite author was Waller, whom he frequently quoted. In point of decorum, he was not quite so exact as you have been told, Sir. I often dined with him,—his mistress (Mrs. Conwys) sat at the head of the table, and Hayter, his natural son by another woman, and very like him, at the bottom, as chaplain: he was afterwards Bishop of London. I have heard, but do not affirm it, that Mrs. Blackburne, before she died, complained of Mrs. Conwys being brought under the same roof. To his clergy he was, I have heard, very imperious. One story I recollect, which showed how much he was a man of this world! and which the Queen herself repeated to my father. On the King's last journey to Hanover, before Lady Yarmouth came over, the Archbishop being with her Majesty, said to her, "Madam, I have been with your Minister Walpole, and he tells me that you are a wise woman, and do not mind your husband's having a mistress." He was a little hurt at not being raised to Canterbury on Wake's death [1737], and said to my father, "You did not think on me; but it is true, I am too old, I am too old." Perhaps, Sir, these are gossiping stories, but at least they hurt nobody now.

I can say little, Sir, for my stupidity or forgetfulness about Hogarth's poetry, which I still am not sure I ever heard, though I knew him so well; but it is an additional argument for my distrusting myself, if my memory fails, which is very possible. A whole volume of Richardson's poetry has been published since my volume was printed, not much to the honour of his muse, but exceedingly so to that of his piety and amiable heart. You will be pleased, too, Sir, with a story Lord Chesterfield told me (too late

[1] The notorious Colonel Francis Charteris, who died in 1731, when Walpole was fourteen.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Compare vol. i. p. 235; vol. ii. p. 250.—CUNNINGHAM.

too) of Jervas, who piqued himself on the reverse, on total infidelity. One day that he had talked very indecently in that strain, Dr. Arbuthnot, who was as devout as Richardson, said to him, "Come, Jervas, this is all an air and affectation; nobody is a sounder believer than you." "I!" said Jervas, "I believe nothing." "Yes, but you do," replied the Doctor; "nay, you not only believe, but practise: you are so scrupulous an observer of the commandments, that you never make the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or," &c.

I fear, Sir, this letter is too long for thanks, and that I have been proving what I have said, of my growing superannuated; but, having made my will in my last volume, you may look on this as a codicil.

P.S. I had sealed my letter, Sir, but break it open, lest you should think soon, that I do not know what I say, or break my resolution lightly. I shall be able to send you in about two months a very curious work that I am going to print, and is actually in the press; but there is not a syllable of my writing in it. It is a discovery just made of two very ancient manuscripts, copies of which were found in two or three libraries in Germany, and of which there are more complete manuscripts at Cambridge. They are of the eleventh century at lowest, and prove that painting in oil was then known, above three hundred years before the pretended invention of Van Eyck. The manuscripts themselves will be printed, with a full introductory Dissertation by the discoverer, Mr. Raspe, a very learned German, formerly librarian to the Landgrave of Hesse, and who writes English surprisingly well. The manuscripts are in the most barbarous monkish Latin, and are much such works as our booksellers publish of receipts for mixing colours, varnishes, &c. One of the authors, who calls himself Theophilus, was a monk; the other, Heraclius, is totally unknown; but the proofs are unquestionable. As my press is out of order, and that besides it would take up too much time to print them there, they will be printed here at my expense, and if there is any surplus, it will be for Raspe's benefit.

1983. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 12, 1780.

Your Florence, no doubt, is much occupied by the death of the Empress-Queen. It turns all eyes on the Emperor, and sets

thousands of tongues to work, the owners of every one of which will expect to pass for a prophet, if Cæsar within these two years takes one step which is at all like twenty, any one of which it is probable he may take. I was with you just forty years ago, when the departed Empress came to the crown. What a tide of events that era occasioned! You and I shall not see much of what this may produce, and therefore I will not guess at a history that is in its cradle for me, and that I shall not be acquainted with when it is come to years of discretion. I wish our own wars were come to that pass.

The new Parliament, which is now gone to keep its Christmas, has been but little ruffled;—nay, as if there were no new matter, they are to tap again, after the holidays, the whole story of Keppel and Palliser. Indeed, at this instant, the town expect news of an engagement between Darby and D'Estaing; though I think there are more reasons for not thinking it probable: however, I have still less skill in naval matters than even in others.

Our old acquaintance, Lord Pomfret, has taken his chastisement very patiently, which looks less mad than he was thought.

This is the sum of my present knowledge: and thus a most turbulent year has the appearance of concluding drowsily enough; and, for fleets and armies, their exploits on both sides would lie in a nutshell. An historian may be sorry, but a man of feeling must rejoice that such scourges as armaments may do such little mischief to the human race. Fame cannot be acquired but by the groans of hospitals full of sufferers! The last act of the Empress-Queen, the stemming the torrent of blood between her son and the King of Prussia, is in my eyes the brightest in her annals.

1984. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Sunday, Dec. 17, 1780.

No, Madam, I have been much out of order, as the outworks have for some time been in ruins; I thought the citadel itself was at last, to use an old word, beleaguered. In short, for some days I had a pain in my stomach, and never having had it there, nor knowing how it feels there, I concluded it was the gout. But it took another turn, and became a disorder that has been fashionable, and was almost gone out of fashion; just the time when the ancient generally adopt modes. I am pretty well again, but look ruefully, as you may believe, for I can afford to part with very little of

my embonpoint. You ask if I shall pass my Christmas in town; I know and feel it is a kind question; but I must answer, alas! yes. I am grown an Astracan lamb, and vegetate in one spot. George Selwyn says he told your Ladyship that I am out of spirits. I did not know it particularly, nor have any cause; but I am sensible they often flag; and one reason for my reluctance to go anywhere is, that if I am not perfectly quiet all the morning, I am exhausted before night. This, with twenty other decays of which I am sensible, makes me shun what I am not fit for.

I will return Lord S.'s letter when I have the honour of seeing your Ladyship. I do not know whether he judges rightly of certain persons just at present. It has been their mood, and may be so still; and I know *one* that having tried others and been rejected, is willing--nay, desirous, of trying with those Lord S. means, what he tried last year; but I should wonder if they were accepted now, unless to expose them, which is not worth while. Nobody blots flimsy blotting-paper out of spite.

My old acquaintance, or rather my acquaintance, old Lady Shelburne,[1] I see by the papers, is dead. How has she left her fortune, once so great, but which, with superabundant cunning, she had rendered almost as crazy as she was latterly?

Your aunt was charming about Madame la Baronne, till *almost* the last minute, and told me they would have very little. But indeed, when people were in love with one another! However, I suppose, to accustom them to economy, she did not give the Baron a dinner even on the wedding-day, and he begged one of the parson that was to marry them. The kitchen was as cold the next day, and the turtles pecked on the same parson's board.

Mr. Morrice has been in England above these two months. I have not seen him, for he has been laid up with the gout at Chiswick from within a week of his arrival, when, I hear, he looked as ill as when he went abroad. I thought Lord John much broken before he went out of town.

The Crapaudines begin to discover amazing charms in Miss Bingham. One of them, as Lord Althorp was talking to her, went up to him, and holding up her fan that Miss might not *see* what she said, told him, "She is a sweet creature!" Another of them repeated this; and yet I would not swear was not the very person

[1] Mary Fitzmaurice, daughter of the honourable William Fitzmaurice of Gallane, county of Kerry—wife of the first Lord Shelburne, and mother of the Prime Minister Lord Shelburne.—CUNNINGHAM.

that said it; for, if a court is no bigger than an egg-shell, it is equally full of jealousy and treachery. I wish the inhabitants of any Court would write comedies—if they could speak truth. They would need but to write down what they have seen and heard—and there would be character with a witness! Lord Hervey did leave a Dialogue of one whole day in the late King's reign—that is, of what commonly passed there. It was not, I believe, exactly what I mean, but rather a ridicule on the individuals of the *dramatis personæ;* I never saw it, but Lady Hervey told me it was the best thing he ever wrote:[1] however, those would be transient ridicules. I would only have general nature, when it has been refined and strained through the thousand sieves of self-love, ambition, envy, malice, mischief, design, treachery, falsehood, and professions, glazed over with perfect ease, good-breeding, and good-humour, and the passions only evaporating through invisible pores, but the angles of the atoms as sharp as needles, and mortal as diamond dust. But how could one describe smiles that assent away another's favour, or a bow purposely omitted, and then recollected as designedly to tell a person he is in disgrace before he knew it himself? Could a pit or gallery comprehend the importance assumed by a bedchamber-woman or a page of the back stairs, in denying some arrant trifle that was a secret in the morning, and is to be in the 'Gazette' at night?

I caught Lady Spencer t'other night in one of these mysteries; it was two nights before Lord Althorp's match was owned; but I had supped at Lord Lucan's with the whole Court of Spencer, and Lord A. had sat at a side-table with the two girls, Miss Molesworth and old Miss Shipley. I knew if I asked directly, I should be answered, "Upon my word *I* know nothing of the matter;" so, after supper, sitting by Lady S. on a settee, I said, "Pray, Lady S., is it owned that Lord A. is to marry—Miss Shipley?" She burst out a-laughing, and could not recompose her face again.

I fear, by your Ladyship's account, that Miss Vernon ought to go abroad; and, if she ought, surely no time should be lost. Old Dr. Monro told my father that he scarce knew anything that asses' milk and change of air would not cure, and that it was better to go into a bad air than not to change it often.

My being confined and idle has made me scribble a volume about nothing. I hope you will be as *désœuvrée* when you are to read it.

[1] See it in 'Lord Hervey's Memoirs,' by Croker, vol. ii. p. 159. It is very clever, and very characteristic.—CUNNINGHAM.

Just as I had finished my letter, I learnt the dreadful calamity that happened at the Opera-house last night. Don't be alarmed, Madam; not a life is lost—yet. There *was* a fire, and it is not yet extinguished. The theatre was brimful in expectation of Vestris. At the end of the second act he appeared; but with so much grace, agility, and strength, that the whole audience fell into convulsions of applause: the men thundered; the ladies, forgetting their delicacy and weakness, clapped with such vehemence, that seventeen broke their arms, sixty-nine sprained their wrists, and three cried Bravo! bravissimo! so rashly, that they have not been able to utter so much as *no* since, any more than both Houses of Parliament. I do not love to exaggerate, but the shouts were so loud that they reached Great Russell-street and terrified Lord Mansfield, who thought the mob was coming again, and fled to Caen Wood; but, though the true cause was soon discovered, there is to be a camp in the Mews every Opera night, and nobody suffered to appear there, but gagged and handcuffed, for really if people are at liberty to applaud what they approve, there is an end of all government!

As folks in the country love to hear of *London fashions*, know, Madam, that the reigning one amongst the *quality* is to go after the opera to the lottery offices, where their Ladyships bet with the keepers. You choose any number you please; if it does not come up next day, you pay five guineas; if it does, receive forty, or in proportion to the age of the *tirage*. The Duchess of Devonshire in one day won nine hundred pounds. General Smith, as the luckiest of all mites, is of the most select parties, and chooses the numeros.

1985. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 19, 1780.

I CANNOT leave you for a moment in error, my good Sir, when you transfer a compliment to me, to which I have not the most slender claim, and defraud another of it to whom it is due.

The friend of Mr. Gray, in whom authorship caused no jealousy or variance, as Mr. Mainwaring says truly, is Mr. Mason. *I* certainly never excelled in poetry, and never attempted the species of poetry alluded to—Odes. Dr. Lort, I suppose, is removing to a living or a prebend, at least; I hope so. He may run a risk if he carries his book to Lambeth. "Sono sonate venti tre ore e mezza,"

as Alexander VIII. said to his nephew, when he was chosen Pope in extreme old age. My Lord of Canterbury's is not extreme, but very tottering. I found in Mr. Gough's new edition, that in the Pepysian library is a view of the theatre in Dorset Gardens, and views of four or five other ancient great mansions. Do the folk of Magdalen ever suffer copies of such things to be taken? If they would, is there anybody at Cambridge that could execute them, and reasonably? Answer me quite at your leisure; and, also, what and by whom the altar-piece is, that Lord Carlisle has given to King's. I did not know he had been of our college. I have two or three plates of Strawberry more than those you mention; but my collections are so numerous, and from various causes my prints have been in such confusion, that at present I neither know where the plates or proofs are.

I intend next summer to set about completing my plan of the Catalogue and its prints; and, when I have found any of the plates or proofs, you shall certainly have those you want. There are the two large views of the house, one of the cottage, one of the library, one of the front to the road, and the chimney-piece in the Holbein room. I think these are all that are finished —oh! yes, I believe the Prior's garden; but I have not seen them these two years. I was so ill the summer before last, that I attended to nothing; the little I thought of in that way last summer, was to get out my last volume of the 'Anecdotes;' now I have nothing to trouble myself about as an editor, and that not publicly, but to finish my Catalogue—and that will be awkwardly enough; for so many articles have been added to my collection since the description was made, that I must add them in the Appendix, or reprint it; and what is more inconvenient, the positions of many of the pictures have been changed; and so it will be a lame piece of work. Adieu, my dear Sir! Yours most cordially.

1986. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 21, 1780.

I AM sorry that my letters of late years contain so many eras; this dates a new one, of an additional war with Holland. The Manifesto of our Court appeared in the 'Gazette Extraordinary' this morning. I am no prophesying politician, you know; and if I

were, as I am too old to be a sanguine one, I should not disperse my Sibylline leaves about Europe.

Another fact, that must speak for itself, is, that Admiral Darby has brought his fleet home, as D'Estaing has led the French and Spanish squadrons and the trade to Brest. Pray desire the Emperor to leave Ostend open, or I shall not be able to write to you at all. It is not very pleasant at present; for, with so many intervening enemies and interlopers, one can converse with no more frankness than in a congress of Ambassadors. I write as much as I can for your satisfaction, but no Continental post-office will ever learn from me a tittle they did not know before. *You* may suffer by it, but I am sure approve me. Do not imagine there is either *tædium* or air in this. I do know nothing before it has happened: it is merely my own comment that I suppress, as I love my country too well to treat foreigners with anything I am sorry for.

Having thus said my say, I have nothing of the least consequence to add. The town is, and will be, empty till the Parliament meets; and then people will return, because it is the fashion to go to Newmarket: for, in countries that are or have been great, the chief philosophers are such as have no philosophy, and who consign over to the inferior classes the sense of public calamities. In fact, the world is grown more intrepid than in ancient days. Our progenitors braved enemies; we moderns defy elements, and do not, like the effeminate Greeks and Romans, go into winter-quarters at the back of the almanack; and thence winds, waves, and climates gain the most considerable victories.

There has been a hurricane at St. Kitt's, that, according to the etiquette of destruction, deserves a triumphal arch,—perhaps *opima spolia*, for nothing has yet been heard of Admiral Rowley! Oh! but I cannot sport, when humanity aches in every nerve! and when the seals of a new book are opened, like those in the Revelations! I detest war, nor can perceive that anybody has cause to exult in it. Adieu!

1987. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY

Christmas Day, 1780.

Though you order me to give you an account of myself, Madam, I shall not obey, for I cannot give you a good one; and one is so apt to talk of one's self, and by the courtesy of self-love to think every trifle of importance, that I will boldly be out of order if I

please, without being responsible to any one; no, not even to a friend.

We have so many enemies, and subdue them so rapidly, that I did not think it was worth while to notify to your Ladyship the new war with Holland. Lord Cornwallis, I suppose, will step over and despatch it in a parenthesis of six weeks, and still be as likely as ever to conquer America. Who is to burn Amsterdam I have not yet heard.

Lord Warwick has already sent me John Thorpe's book, Madam, and a most obliging letter. *The* Ampthill is not Houghton-Ampthill, but the individual palace that stood in your paddock where the Cross is, and in which Queen Catherine *lay*, as royal folk did then, though now they and everybody else only *sleep;* and a spacious and goodly mansion it was. There is not the elevation, nor of Kirby Hatton, built by the dancing Chancellor in 1570; but there is the ground-plan. I remember wanting to make the last Chancellor, Bathurst, dance at one of Mons. de Guines' balls. He came thither very drunk, and, as somebody wished to see the Scotch *reel*, I proposed that my Lord Chancellor should dance it.

I am uncommonly glad, Madam, that Mr. Coxe[1] is destined for Mentor to your Telemachus. His 'Travels' are by far the most sensible of all those late publications, and his principles of the old rock.

Your heroine at Bath, Madam, is from the same quarry in another light, and the counterpart to Cato himself, who accommodated a friend with his own wife, for the sake of virtue, and took her again with as much decorum as possible. Pray read the description in Lucan, or, if you affect not understanding Latin, in Rowe; you will see with what staid gravity those matters were transacted, when good patriots desponded about the Commonwealth. I have not a Lucan in town, or would refer you to the spot.

My nieces are indubitably not going abroad, nor do the Duke and Duchess think of it. They will be in town at the end of next month.

Lord Macartney, I hear, is to sail before that time; Lady Macartney does not go with him. I remember what a quarto my last letter was, and restrain this within bounds.

P.S. I shall not attempt to see Vestris till the weather is milder, though it is the universal voice that he is the only perfect being

[1] Afterwards Archdeacon Coxe, whose historical labours are of so much importance in illustration of the reigns of George the First and his successor.—CUNNINGHAM.

that has dropped from the clouds within the memory of man or woman; but then, indeed, nobody allows memory much retrospect, lest they should seem old themselves. When the Parliament meets, he is to be thanked by the Speaker.

1988. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 31, 1780.

I HAVE received, and thank you much for the curious history[1] of the Count and Countess of Albany; what a wretched conclusion of a wretched family! Surely no royal race was ever so drawn to the dregs! The other Countess [Orford] you mention seems to approach still nearer to dissolution. Her death a year or two ago might have prevented the sale of the pictures,—not that I know it would. Who can say what madness in the hands of villany would or would not have done? Now, I think, her dying would only put more into the reach of rascals. But I am indifferent what they do; nor, but thus occasionally, shall I throw away a thought on that chapter.

All chance of accommodation with Holland is vanished. Count Welderen and his wife departed this morning. All they who are to gain by privateers and captures are delighted with a new field of plunder. Piracy is more practicable than victory. Not being an admirer of wars, I shall reserve my *feux de joie* for peace.

My letters, I think, are rather eras than journals. Three days ago commenced another date—the establishment of a family for the Prince of Wales. I do not know all the names, and fewer of the faces that compose it; nor intend. I, who kissed the hand of George I., have no colt's tooth for the Court of George IV. Nothing is so ridiculous as an antique face in a juvenile drawing-room. I believe that they who have spirits enough to be absurd in their decrepitude, are happy, for they certainly are not sensible of their folly; but I, who have never forgotten what I thought in my youth of such superannuated idiots, dread nothing more than misplacing myself in my old age. In truth, I feel no such appetite; and, excepting the young of my own family, about whom I am interested,

[1] The Pretender's wife complaining to the Great Duke of her husband's beastly behaviour to her, that prince contrived her escape into a convent, and thence sent her to Rome, where she was protected by the Cardinal of York, her husband's brother.—WALPOLE.

I have mighty small satisfaction in the company of *posterity;* for so the present generation seem to me. I would contribute anything to their pleasure, but what cannot contribute to it—my own presence. Alas! how many of this age are swept away before me: six thousand have been mowed down at once by the late hurricane at Barbadoes alone! How Europe is paying the debts it owes to America! Were I a poet, I would paint hosts of Mexicans and Peruvians crowding the shores of Styx, and insulting the multitudes of the usurpers of their continent that have been sending themselves thither for these five or six years. The poor Africans, too, have no call to be merciful to European ghosts. Those miserable slaves have just now seen whole crews of men-of-war swallowed by the late hurricane.

We do not yet know the extent of our loss. You would think it very slight, if you saw how little impression it makes on a luxurious capital. An overgrown metropolis has less sensibility than marble; nor can it be conceived by those not conversant in one. I remember hearing what diverted me then; a young gentlewoman, a native of our rock, St. Helena, and who had never stirred beyond it, being struck with the emotion occasioned there by the arrival of one or two of our China ships, said to the captain, "There must be a great solitude in London as often as the China ships come away!" Her imagination could not have compassed the idea, if she had been told that six years of war, the absence of an army of fifty or sixty thousand men and of all our squadrons, and a new debt of many, many millions, would not make an alteration in the receipts at the door of a single theatre in London. I do not boast of, or applaud, this profligate apathy. When pleasure is our business, our business is never our pleasure; and, if four wars cannot awaken us, we shall die in a dream!

1989. TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 1, 1781.

Your favourable opinion of my father, Sir, is too flattering to me not to thank you for the satisfaction it gave me. Wit, I think, he had not naturally, though I am sure he had none from affectation, as simplicity was a predominant feature in his amiable composition; but he possessed that, perhaps, most true species of wit, which flows from experience and deep knowledge of mankind, and consequently had more in his later than in his earlier years; which is not common

to a talent that generally flashes from spirits, though they alone cannot bestow it. When you was once before so good, Sir, as to suggest to me an attempt at writing my father's life, I probably made you one answer that I must repeat now, which is, that a son's encomiums would be attributed to partiality; and, with my deep devotion to his memory, I should ever suspect it in myself.

But I will set my repugnance in a stronger light, by relating an anecdote not incurious. In the new edition of the 'Biographia Britannica,' Dr. Kippis, the tinker of it, reflecting on my having called the former 'Vindicatio Britannica, or a Defence of Everybody,' *threatened* that when he should come to my father's life he would convince me that the new edition did not deserve that censure.[1] I confess I thought this but an odd sort of historian equity, to reverse Scripture and punish the sins of children upon their fathers! However, I said nothing. Soon after Dr. Kippis himself called on me, and in very gracious terms desired I would favour him with anecdotes of my father's life. This was descending a little from his censorial throne, but I took no notice; and only told him, that I was so persuaded of the fairness of my father's character, that I choose to trust it to the most unprejudiced hands; and that all I could consent to was, that when he shall have written it, if he would communicate it to me, I would point out to him any material facts, if I should find any, that were not truly noted. This was all I could contribute.

Since that time I have seen in the second volume a very gross accusation of Sir Robert, at second or third hand, and to which the smallest attention must give a negative. Sir Robert is accused of having, out of spite, influenced the House of Commons to expel the late Lord Barrington for the notorious job of the Harburg lottery. Spite was not the ingredient most domineering in my father's character; but whatever has been said of the corruption or servility of Houses of Commons, when was there one so prostitute, that it would have expelled one of their own members for a fraud *not proved*, to gratify the vengeance of the Minister? and a Minister must have been implacable indeed, and a House of Commons profligate indeed, to inflict such a stigma on an innocent man, because he had been attached to a rival predecessor of the Minister. It is not less strange that the Harburgher's son should not have vindicated his parent's memory at the opportunity of the

[1] See Letter to Cole of 5th Feb., 1780.—CUNNINGHAM.

secret committee on Sir Robert, but should wait for a manuscript memorandum of Serjeant Skinner after the death of this last. I hope Sir Robert will have no such apologist!

I do not agree less with you, Sir, in your high opinion of King William. I think, and a far better judge, Sir Robert, thought that Prince one of the wisest men that ever lived. Your *bon-mot* of his was quite new to me. There are two or three passages in the Diary of the second Earl of Clarendon that always struck me as instances of wisdom and humour at once; particularly his Majesty's reply to the Lords who advised him (I think at Salisbury) to send away King James; and his few words, after long patience, to that foolish Lord himself, who harangued him on the observance of his declaration. Such traits, and several of Queen Anne (not equally deep) in the same Journal, paint those Princes as characteristically as Lord Clarendon's able father would have drawn them. There are two letters in the 'Nugæ Antiquæ' that exhibit as faithful pictures of Queen Elizabeth and James the First, by delineating them in their private life and unguarded hours.

You are much in the right, Sir, in laughing at those wise personages, who not only dug up the corpse of Edward the First,[1] but *restored* Christian burial to his crown and robes. Methinks, had they deposited those regalia in the treasury of the church, they would have committed no sacrilege. I confess I have not quite so heinous an idea of sacrilege as Dr. Johnson. Of all kinds of robbery, that appears to me the lightest species which injures nobody. Dr. Johnson is so pious, that in his journey to your country, he flatters himself that all his readers will join him in enjoying the destruction of two Dutch crews, who were swallowed up by the ocean after they had robbed a church.[2] I doubt that uncharitable anathema is more in the spirit of the Old Testament than of the New.

1990. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 2, 1781.

Mercy on the poor men that are to be in love with Lady Anne when she comes to maturity of tyranny! If she begins already

[1] See vol. vi. pp. 84, 291.—Cunningham.

[2] The following are Johnson's words:—"The two churches of Elgin were stripped, and the lead was shipped to be sold in Holland: I hope every reader will rejoice that this *cargo* of sacrilege was lost at sea."—Wright.

with enjoining such tasks to her slaves, what will she do in the full career of her power? The Sphinx was a harmless dicky-bird in comparison. To send one four Quipos, and only a hint at an alphabet, and bid one construe four Peruvian verses, without one's having ever learnt a syllable of the language, is despotism unparalleled. She might as well have ordered me to read an Egyptian obelisk, and tell her what was meant by animals so ill drawn that they are like nothing in the creation. My penance is ten times worse; I am to find out rhymes in colours, and thoughts in knots, and cadence in a jangle of orts and ends! I am a Sibyl if I believe that any being but a lady's chambermaid can understand the sense of minced ribbons, or discover sentiments in a salmagundi of black and blue, and red and purple, and white. A piece of a tippet may be very good poetry in Lima for aught I know; and such a genius as Dryden would soon have written a whole birth-day gown from as small a sample as Lady Anne has sent me; but for my part I cannot unsew a single stitch of such millinery versification; and though I will not contemptuously return such silken lines directly, I despair of unravelling them, and will only retain them till I have *effilé'd* them for a whole morning, since it seems that a mistake in a single shade may occasion a blunder or perhaps a *double entendre*.

Your Ladyship's new year's wishes are infinitely kind, though the *molti e felici* are compliments I can only accept as I would flowers strewed on my urn. I am well again; but my late disorder was, I believe, a little of the gout in my stomach; and when once the flaw begins there, where my only strength lay, it would be silly not to know how precarious the tenure is.

Never deluding myself on that chapter, you will not wonder, Madam, that I am little qualified to resolve any questions about the dawn of the next reign. I attend to what is said about the Prince's family no more than I should to a prophet, who should offer to lay before me a vision of the whole next century. Can I forget that I kissed the hand of this Prince of Wales's great great-grandfather, the night but one before he left England for the last time? and that I was then ten years old? Antiquated dukes may hobble into and out of golden chariots, if they think their corpses look well in them —I should not like to lie in state before I am dead.

Methinks the nation itself is fond of a magnificent funeral, and chooses to call in all countries to its burial, or at least to provoke them to despatch it. *Et tu, Brute:* even Holland is to give us a stab. The elements, too, have joined the armed neutrality. What

a catastrophe that of Barbadoes! yet we are all gaiety, nay, delighted with the Dutch war. We lose provinces and islands, and are comforted by barrels of pickled herrings! Then, Madam, what a brave string of Irish peers! they put me in mind of the chain of galley-slaves in 'Don Quixote.' Like them, I dare swear, their new Lordships would one and all assure one—they are honest men!

The ancient sovereigns of this isle are come to a *non plus* too The Countess of Albany is retired into a convent. You know they live at Florence. Last St. Andrew's day, who is the favourite saint *there too*, the Count got so beastly drunk, that at night every filthy consequence ensued. The Countess complaining, he tore her hair, and endeavoured to strangle her. Her screams alarmed the family, and saved her. She privately acquainted the Great Duke, and by his authority and connivance she contrived to take shelter in a convent, declaring she will never return to her husband again, who has in vain reclaimed her from the Great Duke.

Having nothing better to offer as a new year's gift, I shall add a Nuptial Ode that I made for Lady Lucan. It would be presumption to hope it, but if Lady Anne would be so good as to translate it into a wisp of party-coloured silk, and stuff a pincushion with it, I should flatter myself with my work being immortal.

I.

Hymen, O Hymenæe!
To Althorp and Bingham
Ye bards, come and sing 'em,
And all the bells ring 'em,
With ding, ding, a dong.

II.

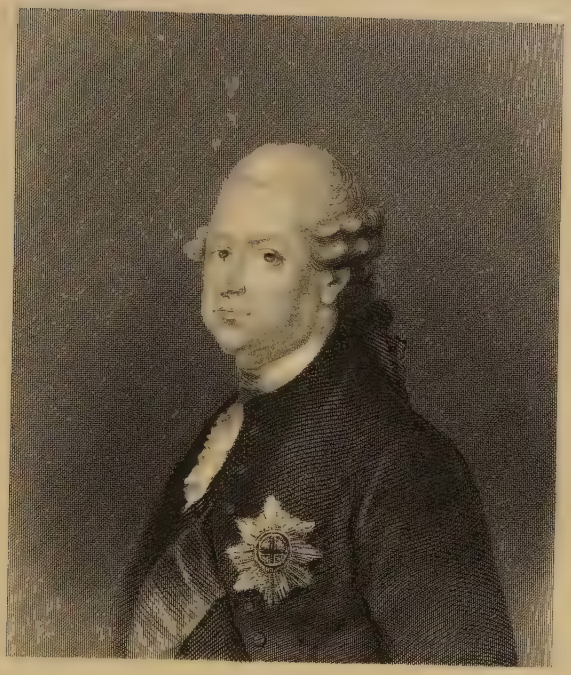
To Althorp and Bingham
But pray do not ding 'em
With this or that thingum,
That may call up in Bingham
A blush all day long.

III.

Your best wishes bring 'em,
Your best roses fling 'em
O'er the hammock, where Bingham
And Althorpe shall swing 'em,
With ding, ding, a dong.

P.S. I am sorry to add so serious a P.S., as that poor Lady Foley[1] died this morning.

[1] Henrietta, fourth daughter of William, second Earl of Harrington.—CUNNINGHAM.



PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD STUART.

1991. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Jan. 3, 1781.

After I had written my note to you last night, I called on * * * *, who gave me the dismal account of Jamaica,[1] that you will see in the 'Gazette,' and of the damage done to our shipping. Admiral Rowley is safe; but they are in apprehensions for Walsingham. He told me, too, what is not in the 'Gazette;' that of the expedition against the Spanish settlements—not a single man survives! The papers to-day, I see, speak of great danger to Gibraltar.

Your brother repeated to me his great desire that you should publish your speech,[2] as he told you. I do not conceive why *he* is so eager for it, for he professes total despair about America. It looks to me as if there was a wish of throwing the blame somewhere; but I profess I am too simple to dive into the objects of shades of intrigues; nor do I care about them. We shall be reduced to a miserable little island; and from a mighty empire sink into as insignificant a country as Denmark or Sardinia! When our trade and marine are gone, the latter of which we keep up by unnatural efforts, to which our debt will put a stop, we shall lose the East Indies as Portugal did; and then France will dictate to us more imperiously than ever we did to Ireland, which is in a manner already gone too.

These are mortifying reflections, to which an English mind cannot easily accommodate itself. But, alas! we have been pursuing the very conduct that France would have prescribed, and more than with all her presumption she could have dared to expect. Could she flatter herself that we would take no advantage of the dilatoriness and unwillingness of Spain to enter into the war? that we would reject the disposition of Russia to

[1] On the 3rd of October occurred one of the most dreadful hurricanes ever experienced in the West Indies. In Jamaica, Savannah La Mar, with three hundred inhabitants, was utterly swept away by an irruption of the sea; and at Barbadoes, on the 10th, Bridge-town, the capital of the island, was almost levelled to the ground, and several thousands of the inhabitants perished.—Wright.

[2] Introductory of a motion "for leave to bring in a bill for quieting the troubles that have for some time subsisted between Great Britain and America, and enabling his Majesty to send out commissioners with full power to treat with America for that purpose." The motion was negatived by 123 against 81. For the speech of General Conway, and a copy of his proposed bill, see Parl. History, vol. xxi. pp. 570, 588.—Wright.

support us? and that our still more natural friend, Holland,[1] would be driven into the league against us? All this has happened, and, like an infant, we are delighted with having set our own frock in a blaze! I sit and gaze with astonishment at our frenzy. Yet why? Are not nations as liable to intoxication as individuals? Are not predictions founded on calculation oftener rejected than the prophecies of dreamers? Do we not act precisely like Charles Fox who thought he had discovered a new truth in figures, when he preached that wise doctrine, that nobody could want money that would pay enough for it? The consequence was, that in two years he left himself without the possibility of borrowing a shilling. I am not surprised at the spirits of a boy of parts; I am not surprised at the people: I do wonder at Government, that games away its consequence. For what are we now really at war with America, France, Spain, and Holland?—Not with hopes of reconquering America; not with the smallest prospect of conquering a foot of land from France, Spain, or Holland.—No; we are at war on the defensive, to protect what is left, or more truly to stave off, for a year perhaps, a peace that must proclaim our nakedness and impotence.

I would not willingly recur to that womanish vision of, Something may turn up in our favour. That something must be a naval victory that will annihilate at once all the squadrons of Europe—must wipe off forty millions of new debt—reconcile the affections of America, that for six years we have laboured to alienate; and that must recall out of the grave the armies and sailors that are perished—and that must make thirteen provinces willing to receive the law, without the necessity of keeping ten thousand men amongst them. The gigantic imagination of Lord Chatham would not entertain such a chimera. Lord * * * * perhaps, would say he did, rather than not undertake; or Mr. Burke could form a metaphoric vision that would satisfy no imagination but his own; but I, who am *nullius addictus jurare in verba*, have no hopes either in our resources or in our geniuses, and look on my country already as undone! It is grievous—but I shall not have much time to lament its fall.

[1] Mr. Henry Laurens, president of the American council, having been taken by one of the king's frigates early in October, 1780, on his passage to Holland, and it being discovered by the papers in his possession that the American States had been long carrying on a secret correspondence with Amsterdam, Sir Joseph Yorke, the British minister at the Hague, demanded a satisfactory explanation; but the same not being afforded, hostilities against Holland were declared on the 28th of December, 1780.—Wright.

1992. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Jan. 4, 1781.

I RETURN the Quipos, Madam, because if I retained them till I understand them, I fear you would never have them again. I should as soon be able to hold a dialogue with a rainbow, by the help of its grammar, a prism, for I have not yet discovered which is the first or last verse of four lines that hang like ropes of onions. Yet it is not for want of study, or want of respect for the Peruvian manner of writing. I perceive it is a very soft language, and, though at first I tangled the poem and spoiled the rhymes, yet I can conceive that a harlequin's jacket, artfully arranged by a princess of the blood of Mango Capac, may contain a deep tragedy, and that a tawdry trimming may be a version of Solomon's Song. Nay, I can already say my alphabet of six colours, and know that each stands indiscriminately *but* for four letters, which gives the Peruvian a great advantage over the Hebrew tongue, in which the total want of vowels left every word at the mercy of the reader; and, though our salvation depended upon it, we did not know precisely what any word signified, till the invention of points, that were not used till the language had been obsolete for some thousands of years. A little uncertainty, as where one has but one letter instead of four, may give rise to many beauties. Puns must be greatly assisted by that ambiguity, and the delicacies of the language may depend on an almost imperceptible variation in the shades, as the perfection of the Chinese consists in possessing but very few syllables, each of which admits ten thousand accents, and thence pronunciation is the most difficult part of their literature.

At first sight, the resemblance of blue and green by candlelight seems to be an objection to the Peruvian; but any learned mercer might obviate that, by opposing indigo to grass-green, and ultramarine to *verd de pomme.* The more expert one were at *nuances,* the more poetic one should be, or the more eloquent. A vermilion *A* must denote a weaker accent, or even passion, than one of carmine and crimson; and a straw-colour *U* be much more tender than one approaching to orange.

I have heard of a French perfumer who wrote an essay on the harmony of essences. Why should not that idea be extended? The Peruvian Quipos adapted a language to the eyes, rather than to the

ears. Why should not there be one for the nose? The more the senses can be used indifferently for each other, the more our understandings would be enlarged. A rose, a jessamine, a pink, a jonquil, and a honeysuckle, might signify the vowels; the consonants to be represented by other flowers. The Cape jessamine, which has two smells, was born a diphthong. How charming it would be to smell an ode from a nosegay, and to scent one's handkerchief with a favourite song. Indeed, many improvements might be made on the Quipos themselves, especially as they might be worn, as well as perused. A trimming set on a new lute-string would be equivalent to a second edition with corrections. I am only surprised that, in a country like Peru, where gold and silver thread were so cheap, there was no *clinquant* introduced into their poetry. In short, Madam, I am so pleased with the idea of knotting verses, which is vastly preferable to anagrams and acrostics, that if I were to begin life again, I would use a shuttle, instead of a pen, and write verses by the yard. As it is, I have not been idle; nay, like any heaven-born genius, I have begun to write before I can read; and, though I have not yet learned to decipher, I can at least cipher like Atahualpa himself. As a proof of my proficience, pray, Madam, construe the following colours:—

Brown, blue, white, yellow green yellow yellow white, red brown brown blue white.

As I was writing this last line, I received your Ladyship's interpretation of the verses. Whoever made them they are excellent, and it would have been cruel to deprive me of them till I could have unravelled them. Pray tell me who made them, for they are really good and sterling. I am sorry I expressed myself so awkwardly, that you thought I disapproved of the Quipos. On the contrary, you see how much they have amused me. In good truth, I was glad of anything that would occupy me, and turn my attention from all the horrors one hears or apprehends. I am sorry I have read the devastation of Barbadoes and Jamaica, &c., &c.; when one can do no good, can neither prevent nor redress, nor has any personal share, by one's self or one's friends, is it not excusable to steep one's attention in anything? I fear, Madam, you and Lord Ossory have a suffering friend: poor Mr. James,[1] I hear, is totally ruined—his whole property swept away! There is another dreadful history, less known: the expedition sent against the Spanish settle-

[1] Haughton James. See vol. vi. p. 79.—CUNNINGHAM.

ments is cut off by the climate, and not a single being is left alive. The Duchess of Bedford told me last night that the poor soldiers were so averse, that they were driven to the march by the point of the bayonet, and that, besides the men, twenty-five officers have perished.

Lord Cornwallis and his tiny army are scarce in a more prosperous way. On this dismal canvas a fourth war is embroidered; and what, I think, threatens still more, the French administration is changed, and likely to be composed of more active men, and much more hostile to England. Our ruin seems to me inevitable. Nay, I know those who smile in the drawing-room, that groan by their fireside: they own we have no more men to send to America, and think our credit almost as nearly exhausted. Can you wonder, then, Madam, if I am glad to play with Quipos—Oh, no! nor can I be sorry to be on the verge—does one wish to live to weep over the ruins of Carthage?

1993. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Thursday night late, Jan. 4, 1781.

I HAVE not written to you for several reasons. The best were, that I had nothing to tell you that you would wish to know, or like to hear. The worst is, that I have been much out of order, first, with a complaint in my bowels, which being weak, the gout took the opportunity and joined it. Then I caught cold, and then was lame in my ankle, which turned to a cough; but all these shapes were, I firmly believe, the gout, which I have long known for a harlequin, that can assume any form. I am now pretty well, and sit down to chat with you; still I do not know where you are, but conclude if not at Aston that you will soon be there.

This good town is quite happy, for it has gotten a new plaything —a Dutch war; and the folks that are to gain by privateering, have persuaded those who are to pay the piper, to dance for joy. In the midst of this exultation came accounts that would make anybody shudder, but an overgrown capital, who care for nothing but their daily bread, news, and *circenses*. All Barbadoes and half Jamaica are annihilated. The inhabitants are buried or famishing. The shipping too has suffered deplorably. The events in America are not more flattering. Leslie, who had taken a walk into two or three open towns, one of which was Norfolk, that we burnt three or four

years ago, has been recalled and is re-embarked, to try to save Lord Cornwallis, who has found the country as hostile as it was proclaimed to be friendly, and is in great danger too from five thousand men despatched by Washington to strengthen Gates. An expedition sent against the Spanish settlements has been so totally destroyed by the climate that not a single man is left alive. The officers, to the number of twenty-five, are all dead too. My pen revolts at detailing such horrors! If I turn from them I have nothing else to tell you. I used to write of books as well as news—I have not seen one. Raspe's book indeed is in the press and will appear in February; I have been correcting the second sheet this evening.

Before Mr. Stonhewer went out of town he told me you had left your 'Fresnoy' in the hands of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who is to write notes to it. I complain that you never showed it to me, but am content if it is near being published.

Mrs. Delany has been ill and is become very deaf. I saw Mr. Frederic Montagu with her, and he has been with me and seems perfectly recovered.

My chief business with you is to ask when you come? I suppose you will not condescend to answer, for you have as many *humours* as ancient Pistol. It don't signify; I have a plenary indulgence for the wayward moods of my friends: nay, like them better than the perfections of those I do not love—not that I believe the latter have one. Thus I prefer the letters you do not write to me, to the most sweet epistles from anybody from whom I should not wish to hear; you will say, one receives few such. I certainly do not, yet how many men wish for such! What is power but a desire of receiving thousands of flattering solicitations from the Lord knows whom! and an opportunity of being forced to oblige hundreds whom they wish at the Devil! Well, I am past sixty-three; you will not have me long, and then I think you will be a little sorry. Adieu![1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, near Sheffield, Jan. 21, 1781.

Your last found me on a visit in the North (*i.e.* further North than York) after I had made my appearance at our Committee on the third, and taken upon me, not the office of a deputy, but all the principles of one by joining in the resolution which makes the printed Address of that body to the electors, &c. the act and deed of the whole. I fear that Address will not quite quadrate with your sentiments, but I must be bold to tell you that it does entirely with mine; so much so, that I believe had an Association been formed on the same principles thirty years ago, I should have been as ready to have joined it then, as at present, for I know of no moment since I have ever been able to think of political matters that the glaring defects

1994. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Jan. 9, 1781.

YOUR Ladyship takes so kind a part in all that concerns me, that, though I could not have told you how thunderstruck I was yesterday

of Parliamentary representation have not appeared to me in the same light which they do at present. However, let us not dispute about the matter, as no consequences are ever likely to come from it. Good or bad in my sense, or bad or good in yours, 'tis the duty of an honest man to declare his sentiments when a public opportunity calls for it, in matters of such a kind as this. I have done so, and have thereby satisfied my conscience.

I now turn to answer what you obligingly call the chief business of your letter, *vid.*: when I return to town? To tell you a secret, I left town, merely that by appearing at York on the 3rd, I might avoid being appointed one of the deputies, and I shall stay from town merely to avoid altercations with my friends on that subject. I do not mean with you, but with others of whom you wot well. I therefore at present intend to stay in the country till late in the spring, and then shall be happy to smell your first roses at Strawberry; from thence perhaps go to Nuneham, and in August return to my Residentiary imprisonment at York, which begins on the 11th of that month. This is my present plan, and I hope nothing will prevent me from altering it, though I foresee some family matters which may lead me to change my resolution and come sooner.

Mr. Stonhewer will have in a few days a complete copy of my translation of 'Fresnoy' with the text adjoined. In this state it will probably lie some time in the hope of being joined by some of Sir Joshua Reynolds's notes; the only thing that in these days will probably make it be taken notice of by the public. If you choose to look it over, you are very welcome so to do, but it is so dry and didactic that I fear it will tire you, on which account I never thought it worth while to show it to you. If you do read it, all the eulogium I expect will be, that "I have bestowed more pains about it than the thing was worth." But I have much greater hopes of your applause on my fourth book of the 'English Garden,' which is now almost finished, and shall go to the York Press very soon. The subject you know is that of Ornamental Buildings, Menageries, Conservatories, &c., and with this I have contrived to interweave a pathetic story thoughout, so that the whole book will be (if you can have any idea from the term) an Episodico-didactico-pathetico-politico-farrago, unlike everything ever was written or will be written. The improvers will like it for its taste, the ladies for its tenderness; Opposition for its Americality;—yet of this last it has no more than was absolutely necessary for the fable, and that so gently touched, that even Bishops will be forced to applaud it for its humanity,—I had almost said Christianity. I wish it was possible to have it published on the Fast morning on this very account.

Pray let me have Raspe's book as soon as published, and let me hope that, in spite of what you are pleased to call my ancient Pistolish humours, that I shall still be favoured with both your political and literary Mercuries, as time serves. I know of no man to whom they will be more acceptable, nor to whom they will, on your part, be more charitably administered. I solicit them particularly at present, because I expect Palgrave (who I left at Mr. Weddels) to sojourn with me some time in his way southward. He comes the latter end of this week, and if I have nothing to entertain him with but the London Packet, my only intelligencer, he will soon I fear quit his quarters. If therefore you write me anything that you wish him not to see (for something he must see when a letter comes from you), write, as the Secretaries of State do, "most secret" before the paragraph. What is only private and particular he will have

with news of the loss of Jersey, and alarmed for General Conway, who was but two hours in town, and had not time to see me, and set out with a broken arm not quite recovered, yet I must communicate the sudden transition to joy, and relief from the worst part of my alarm. The troops in Jersey made a stand, gained a complete victory, and took all the remaining French that had landed, prisoners. Mr. Conway, I conclude, will proceed, and thank his little army, who, without detracting from their merit, certainly owe some of it to his discipline—well, Madam, *je respire!* These rapid revulsions are a little too much for such harassed nerves as mine—but you forbid me—and I am silent.

I received two packets from your Ladyship last night, and at almost any other moment should have enjoyed them. I can now go over them again, and with pleasure, except the article of Miss Vernon. Your picture of her is very alarming—I tremble for your Ladyship, and for her brothers and sisters!—but alarms of every kind will be the lot of all that have any feeling for some time; and even hearts of rock will groan at last, for gold lies in the hearts of those rocks, and is as sensitive as the most shattered nerves. Nor will ducal coronets or portraits of Lord and Lady Spencer console them, if the mines of ore and diamonds are swept away. I had not heard that anecdote of Cunningham. It is one of those traits, that whatever is said of comedy, nay, of the exaggeration of farce, would be too strong for the stage. The bombast passion of a lover in a romance might be carried to such an excess; but a governor writing on the ruins of a whole island levelled by the most fatal of all hurricanes, that his chief misery was the loss of—what?—his bracelets with the portraits of his idols—who would dare to bring such a revolting hyperbole on the stage?

Excuse me, Madam, but I do believe there is a great flaw in my memory; I cannot recollect what you allude to by *pigs*. Pray tell me, and, which you have not done, the author or authoress of the verses on the Quipos. The explication of mine is, if I ciphered it right, *je vous aime*. Perhaps I ought to have told you it was French.

a right of perusing. You see I have not forgot the mysteries I learned when Gray put me (as he said when I went to Lord Holdernesse's) apprentice to a Secretary of State. And now, having scribbled so much that I must be forced to put it into an envelope, I conclude with desiring and beseeching that I may have you long, because the longer that I have you, I am sure I shall be the more sorry to part with you; but had I lost you many years ago, assure yourself my sorrow would not have been so little as the Corsican Fairy. Dixi. W. Mason.

Somebody knocks, I must finish; but it is not necessary to make excuses for short letters, when I so often send you such long ones. It was Mr. Cambridge to ask news of Jersey, and to trumpet a victory of Carleton the Lord knows where, at t'other end of the world; I neither satisfied his curiosity, nor listened to his Gazette.

P.S. Mr. Crawfurd has called on me, too, and tells me Mr. James's loss will be but about 15,000*l.*, and that he can bear it; but the Storers are totally undone, and so George Selwyn says too. I pity them! I forgot to tell your Ladyship that I met Mrs. Montagu t'other night at a visit. She said she had been alone the whole preceding day, *quite hermetically sealed*—I was very glad she was uncorked, or I might have missed that piece of learned nonsense!

1995. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 9, 1781.

This can be but a short letter, for I have scarcely time to write it; but as to-day's papers would alarm you, and cannot carry the relief which arrived since they were printed, I cannot leave you for a moment under anxiety—I may say, for *me*, as I am so much concerned. In short, advice came by daybreak yesterday, that two thousand French (magnified to above four thousand) had landed on Saturday last in Jersey, had seized the lieutenant-governor in his bed, and were masters of the island. Orders were sent to Portsmouth to send what force could be had, and an express to General Conway to bid him repair thither. He came to town on wings of winds, and never pulled them off, and in two hours was on the road to Portsmouth. I did not see him, for he never wastes an instant on such occasions. Judge of my anxiety! It was for more than his broken arm. Well, at noon to-day we heard that the troops had rallied, attacked the French, gained a complete victory, pushed four hundred into the sea, and taken twelve hundred. These are the troops that Mr. Conway himself formed last year. *To me* this battle is worth the day at Blenheim.

1996. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 14, 1781.

I BEG we may correspond no more in Peruvian, Madam, for it would take less time to send our letters to Lima to be interpreted, than to decipher three words. I return the alphabet, and humbly hope you had forgotten your A B C, for the words as I read them are, *on vous aimons*, which so good a grammarian as your Ladyship could not have written, if you remembered your colours; unless, which is much more probable, I have not expounded them rightly, for I certainly have no genius for so brocaded a language, which is like a piece of silk, all confusion, till it is unfolded. I will tell you what is of more importance. I asked the Duchess of Bedford t'other night at Princess Amelie's how she found Miss Vernon? "Oh," said she, "I never saw her look so pretty; the journey had given her a charming colour." Dr. Warren was with her three times yesterday, and says, "if she does not go to three assemblies in an evening, she will be very well." In truth, I do not much depend on this account; the glow might be hectic, and three visits in one day did not sound well; and, besides, her Grace is apt to see everything *couleur de rose*, still I think your own tenderness made you think her worse than she may be—I hope so.

You have seen Mr. Fox's combat with highwaymen in the papers; at first I concluded they were not highwaymen, but Highlanders, and that Messrs. Adam and Fullerton were ambitious of farther preferment.

I know nothing farther of Jersey, so contrary is the wind; nor anything else, but that Lord Carlisle is laid up with the gout.

Your Ladyship's history of Mr. Whitbread the brewer and his insolent wealth, came very *à propos* to what the Princess said t'other night. She was talking of the crew of Irish peers, and said to the Duchess of Bedford, "I would not give a straw to be a peer in this country—no, give me a good brewhouse; *that* is what makes one considerable here." I doubt, if we brew as we bake, nothing will make us considerable long!

May not I ask, Madam, if you do not begin to think of London? Shall not Lady Anne learn of Vestris, while you have a shilling left? Pray let her be fit to make a curtsey like a Christian, in case the French should land. You will really keep her and your-

self in the country till you will feel for your friends that are undone by hurricanes, or till you lament the war with Holland, though you might have a share in a privateer, and though John St. John has a contract for furnishing us with plaything-coaches, that are neater than the Dutch ones, and as cheap as Mr. Atkinson's rum. Do but come to town, and you will not have a fear or a care left. The serene house of Brudenel will steep your senses and feelings in a delicious lethargy, and you will see everything through an eternal mist, as the Scotch do, and which they call second sight, not having the first gift of sight, which is to see things as they are.

I was much diverted with your setting Mrs. Montagu on her head, which indeed she does herself without the help of Hermes. She is one of my principal entertainments at Mrs. Vesey's, who collects all the graduates and candidates for fame, where they vie with one another, till they are as unintelligible as the good folks at Babel. I am again interrupted—all one's letters, one's time, one's occupations are cracked by alarms! Colonel Conway is just arrived; his uncle and he were overtaken, nay, sailed in a tempest; they saw a transport with sixty poor men perish, and fear the cutter, that preceded to notify their arriving to Jersey, is lost. 'The Emerald' was tossed for two days and nights, and General Conway's broken arm was hurt; Captain Marshal, a stout sailor, gave them up, the sailors were lashed, or could not stand to their work; the wind changed providentially, or they were lost on the rocks, and carried them to Plymouth, where the Conways landed: Colonel Conway found his wife miscarrying. Oh! I could fill my paper with distresses; but the Parliament will meet in two or three days, and vote that we are all felicity and glory! General Conway is stopped at Park-place to cure his bruises, as his island is safe—I have not time to say more.

Monday.

Colonel Conway was with me an hour this morning, and has given me such an account of their voyage as makes me shudder; and I have since received a note from Lady Aylesbury, to tell me her husband is in bed with the rheumatism and fatigue, but I fear with his arm, for his nephew says it was very painful to him, though neither the pain nor their peril made the smallest impression on his calmness, which astonished even his nephew, who knows him. Thank God he is alive! It is a time to feel any blessing to oneself, when so many are in anguish!

1997. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

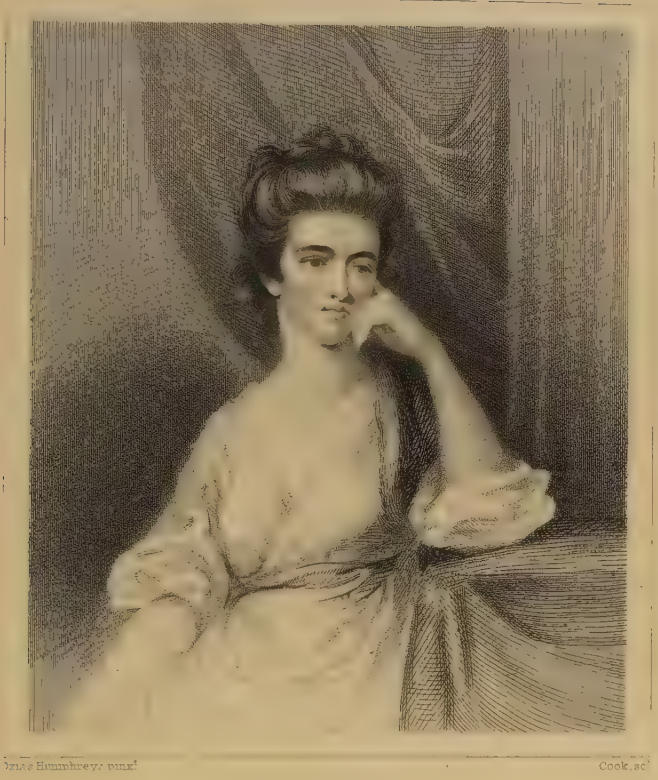
Berkeley Square, Jan. 18, 1781.

I HAVE received your second letter about the Countess of Albany, and her retreat to Rome—or rather her imprisonment there. Are they Jews enough, if the Count should die, to uncanonise the Cardinal, and make him raise up issue to his brother, which the brother could not do for himself?

I told you last week of the loss and recovery of Jersey. General Conway, without losing a second, embarked at Portsmouth in the heat of such a storm, that a transport with sixty men was lost as he sailed, and the cutter that preceded, to notify his coming, has not been heard of since! He was tempested about for two whole days and nights, in such danger that the captain of the frigate despaired. Though it was a disappointment and vexation, for they knew nothing of the safety of the island, it was fortunate that they could not get out of the Channel, or they had probably been lost! With great difficulty they got into Plymouth, where they learnt the good news from the French themselves, who had been made prisoners in Jersey. Mr. Conway arrived at Park-place on Sunday last, but was forced to take to his bed, where he remained till yesterday, when he rose for a few hours. He had caught a cold, rheumatism all over, and a fever: what was worse, and perhaps the cause of his fever, a good-natured sailor, seeing him awkward at getting up the ladder into the frigate, and not knowing, or not considering, that he had a broken arm, gave it such a kind tug, that he almost broke it again. In that pain of body and mind he retained all his patience and tranquillity, and astonished even his own nephew, Colonel Conway,[1] who knows him, and who repeated it to me with as much admiration as if he had never seen him before. I flatter myself that he will be able to come to town on Monday.

This is a most interesting chapter to me, and, as such, I perhaps have dwelt on it too long. But it intercepts nothing else. Not an event has happened, nor an account arrived of any, since I wrote last week. Tuesday the Parliamentary campaign will open again. I know full as little of what are to be its objects. Sir Joseph Yorke, not being returned, makes the conjecturers imagine the reconciliation

[1] Robert, third son of Francis, Earl of Hertford.—WALPOLE.



Ozias Humphreys pinxt. Cook, sc.

THE DUCHESS OF ALBANY.

with Holland is not desperate. They say, too, that the Dutch have not yet issued letters of marque; but on those matters I talk quite in the dark, and with the vulgar. I hold to the world but by few threads; and, when an old man takes no pains to keep up the connection, the world is not at all solicitous to preserve it. Your nephew, I conclude, will soon be in town, and will be more copious than I am.

It is not that I have less inclination than ever to be your journalist, but I now live in so confined a circle, that common occurrences rarely arrive to me till they have been in all the newspapers—and, to give those historians their due, nothing comes amiss to them; and, lest they should defraud their customers, they keep open shop for everything, true or false, or scandalous, or ever so private, or ever so little relative to the public. Ancient annalists thought nobody game below a monarch, or a general, or a high-priest. Modern intelligencers have no mercy on posterity; and, not considering how enormous the lack of events is grown, contribute all in their power to store the world with the history of everybody in it. In truth, this duty has become so extensive, that it has totally given exclusion *here* to all the rest of the earth where we are not concerned.

We know no more of what passes in Europe than in Africa. To make amends, America and Asia are fully discussed. At this moment, I might, if I pleased, be perfectly acquainted with the King of Tanjore and all his affairs; not quite upon his own account, but because there is a contest at the India House about one Mr. Benfield; who, by the way, is believed to be agent for the nabob of Arcot, and to have retained nine members of Parliament in the interest of that petty sovereign—scandal, to be sure! And perhaps you think I am talking to you out of the 'Mogul Tales;' but I have long told you that you have—can have—no idea of your own country. Well: look into the Roman History just before the fall of the Republic; you will find orations for King Deiotarus, and of proconsuls pensioned by tributary sovereigns. In short, you will see how splendid and vile the ruins were of a great empire!

Feb. 2nd.

It is said that more than one surly rescript has been received from Russia, with whom we look to have war. The Parliament is most courtly: yesterday, indeed, there were an hundred and forty-nine for a censure on the preferment of Sir Hugh Palliser to Greenwich Hospital, but above two hundred admired the choice.

On Monday is to begin the trial of Lord George Gordon, which will at least occupy everybody for some days. I should be inclined to leave that subject to your nephew, but I do not know whether he is in town; at least I have not seen him, nor heard his name this winter.

The East Indian fleet, of vast value, is safe arrived in Ireland. Sir Thomas Rumbold is on board it, and his *value* is estimated at a million. I do not wonder that a nabob can afford to buy a gang of members of Parliament.

1998. LORD HERTFORD TO HORACE WALPOLE.[1]

DEAR HORRY, *Grosvenor Street, 23rd January,* 1781.

THE extreme badness of the day may prevent my calling upon you. I therefore send you a very disagreeable packet I received last night from my brother. I shall write to-day, and entreat him not to allow such a correspondent as Lord Hillsborough to affect his feelings, and bring him to town before he can return with safety, for which the present weather does not seem calculated.

Yours ever,

HERTFORD.

[1] Now first published. The enclosures, relating as they do to Walpole's most intimate friend and relation, will be read with interest:

[*Private.*]

LORD HILLSBOROUGH TO MR. CONWAY.

SIR, *St. James's, 19th Jan.,* 1781.

I HAVE received the favour of your private letter, dated from Park-place, 17th instant, and am extremely sorry your intentions of coming to town have been prevented by so disagreeable a cause. The King is very far from wishing you to remove from Park-place a minute sooner than you can do it with perfect safety; and I am directed by his Majesty to send you a further leave of absence from your government on account of the state of your health, as otherwise the circumstances of that island might seem to require your attendance. My letter for that purpose goes to you by this post. If you will favour me with the accounts you have received relative to the late affair at Jersey, I will have the honour to lay them before the King. Permit me to assure you that it will give me great pleasure to hear of your perfect recovery.

I have, &c.

HILLSBOROUGH.

LORD HILLSBOROUGH TO MR. CONWAY.

SIR, *St. James's, 19th Jan.,* 1781.

THE King being informed of the present ill state of your health, is graciously pleased to continue your leave of absence from your government; and, having directed Lieutenant-Governor Corbet to repair forthwith to London, in order to explain some parts of his conduct, has been pleased to grant a commission to Colonel George Scott,

1999. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 25, 1781.

You know I never pretend to continue my gazette, Madam, when Lord Ossory is in town. I can only send the dried skin of news,

of the 83rd Foot, to act as Lieutenant-Governor during your absence and that of Lieutenant-Governor Corbet.

I have, &c.,
HILLSBOROUGH.

MR. CONWAY TO THE EARL OF HILLSBOROUGH.

21*st Jan.*, 1781.

I RECEIVED the leave of absence which your Lordship tells me his Majesty was pleased to order during the continuance of my illness, which I therefore presume I am rather to look upon as a formal order to repair to my government as soon as my health permits; for, though your Lordship is pleased to call it a further leave of absence, I never was before honoured with any leave of absence in form, nor, as I imagine, any governor of either of the islands for many years past; and, I must confess, I was so conscious that the slightest hint of his Majesty's pleasure was sufficient at any time to make me set out at a moment's warning, as the novelty of this form struck me with some apprehension that I might by some means inadvertently have incurred his Majesty's displeasure on this occasion. I must, therefore, beg, in a few words, to trouble your Lordship with an explanation of my conduct.

When I had the honour of seeing your Lordship in London before my departure, you were pleased to tell me that though the despatch I had received contained an account of an actual invasion of the island, it was not thought necessary to give me even a hint that it was his Majesty's pleasure that I should repair there. I believe I need not, however, explain to your Lordship that I did not lose a moment's time in making my utmost for that purpose. The weather baffled those attempts, as your Lordship knows. Had it been possible to make the port of Dartmouth, which we attempted, my purpose was to have gone immediately from thence by land to Portsmouth, in order to embark on board the first ship that might be ready to carry me to Jersey. I had the same intention, even when we were driven into Plymouth, as the fierceness and obstinacy of the easterly wind which then blew seemed, in the opinion of the sailors, not to leave the smallest prospect of reaching the island from any western port; but meeting at Plymouth the officer who brought over the French prisoners, from whom and others I had so distinct and certain an account of the total defeat of the French weak and ill-conducted expedition, I then changed my mind, and thought it would be much more for his Majesty's service that I should have the honour of attending him to receive his commands in England; and to give my best intelligence and assistance in regard to several matters of importance, which I foresaw would stand in need of immediate settlement, relative to my government, and which I thought, from the distance and difficulty of communication with that island, particularly at this season of the year, might be more easily settled in a week or fortnight here, than in several months' residence in the island. If in this I have erred, I am heartily to beg his Majesty's pardon; and the moment my health permits shall be ready to receive his Majesty's commands, in any shape which shall be most pleasing to him.

MR. CONWAY TO LORD HERTFORD.

DEAR BROTHER, *Park Place, 21st Jan.*, 1781.

THIS is my first attempt to write with my own hand. I can't tell how I shall

and he can give you the marrow. He was so good as to sit with me two hours yesterday morning.

I certainly do love, and have for forty years loved General Conway as my dearest friend, and consequently am very uneasy about him.

succeed; I am still very weak, and hobble sadly about my room, though my rheumatic pains have in a manner left me, and there are but small remains of my fever.

It is now turned out as I expected: I have, from the first, thought that there was something wrong at bottom. I had not from Lord Hillsborough the smallest word of approbation, or thanks, on my return, when I explained to him the state of my health from hence. I received from him in return the cold formal letter (copy of which I inclose), accompanied with a formal *leave of absence*, on account of my health, which his Lordship styles a *further leave of absence*, though no leave of absence did actually exist, nor have I, nor any other governor of either island, I apprehend for these fifty years, had any *leaves of absence* at all, except when having voluntarily gone over to the island.

I have acquainted his Majesty with my intention to return, and had his approbation, so that it is impossible to look upon this *apparent leave of absence*, in my circumstances, otherwise than as an order to repair to Jersey the moment my health permits. The most unkind and distressful of orders! as it subjects my conduct in the execution to the censure of anybody who may be inclined to comment upon it, exclusive of what relates to my own feelings. I look upon this unnecessary and ostentatious leave of absence as, in effect, meant to destroy all idea of confidence in me, to cancel any merit I may have pretended to for my care and assiduity in that government, and to set me in the light of a person wanting the spur and goad of Government to keep me to my duty. Such are the arts by which our present Government delight to ensnare and keep in subjection those who serve them. If I do not repair to Jersey the moment I am able to stir out, if I am seen in the street, at court, or in the House of Commons, they may say, why is he not at his government? *His leave of absence* is limited by the duration of his illness. So that I seem from henceforth to be considered in the light of a residentiary governor, or other officer of inferior rank, wanting leaves of absence like a colonel and lieutenant-colonel of the garrison. In this situation you see, my dear brother, that his Lordship has contrived to set me agreeably on a seat of thorns, even on the moment of my illness, as a return for the assiduity I may on former occasions, or on the present, have shown in doing my duty. In this light, therefore, I hope you will not think I have said too much to his Lordship in my letter, being conceived in terms, I hope you will judge, neither disrespectful nor peevish. You see I was not able to continue to the end with my own hand, which I really found too fatiguing; but hope that, as soon as the little remains of my fever are conquered, I shall gather strength fast.

I am, my dear brother,

Yours affectionately,

H. S. C.

P.S. Pray show this and the inclosure to Mr. Walpole: I have referred him to you for that purpose.

THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY TO HORACE WALPOLE.

Mr. Conway is writing to you at this present minute, much against my good will and advice; but he is too much hurt with that brutal letter of Lord Hillsborough to be quiet till he gives you an account of it. I cannot express the anxiety and indignation I feel at finding him so ungratefully treated, after all he has done and suffered for his duty. I need not recapitulate it to you; yet I cannot help repeating his having passed four months in Jersey in '81 [query], and seven months last year; and new-modelling all things with such success in the island, as to have had the approbation and thanks of his Majesty. On this occasion you know he rather flew

He is extremely out of order still; and had I not been deceived about him on his return, and if I did not every day expect him to be brought to town, I should have gone to him. I am now waiting for the post, which I hope will bring me a more satisfactory account.

My gaming losses, Madam, have been trifling, and my luck, as usual, fluctuating, so as to make very little difference. Still I do not decline the purse, which I shall value, though it should not have an enriching virtue.

I have seen Vestris, and remain in my senses.

2000. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 27, 1781.

We shall certainly have no difference about the Yorkshire Address or directions. It would be very idle to enter into an altercation about the mode of wrapping up a medicine, which the patient never intends to swallow. It is true, I think *the disease* cannot dislike the prescription, for it finds more fault with half of the doctors, than with the distemper, but I look on the case as desperate; unless, as has been known to happen, poverty and fasting should root out the scurvy, when neither the College nor quacks could make any

than travelled; and, at the peril of his life, attempted to get to Jersey,—for which he has been laid up with a severe illness, which would have proved a dangerous one, had it not been taken in time; and now, but beginning to recover, and just getting from his bed, Lord H. intimates that he is loitering his time away, whilst he should be upon his duty, and making it a favour that the King gives him *leave* of absence, which never was thought necessary to be given to a governor before, and only to officers of inferior rank. I must complain to you to unburthen myself, though Mr. Conway will himself, I am sure, explain the whole affair. I am miserable, too, that musing over these things should affect his health, and retard his recovery,—nay, rather I am sure it will, for he slept less last night, and seems weaker. Mr. Mappleton, however, is very well satisfied with his amendment, and all he finds fault with is, that his pulse beats two strokes more than it usually does in a minute, which makes him apprehend the fever is not quite off, and his having a little cough; for as to the rheumatism, it is very much diminished indeed, and I should hope the fever also very inconsiderable, as, after he eat his chicken yesterday, he was neither hot, nor his face flushed.

I find myself in an error, for I thought Mr. Conway was writing to you whilst he was writing to Lord Hertford, to whom he begs you would go, to see Lord Hillsborough's letter, with his answer, &c. By my persuasion, and finding writing fatigues him, he will not write to you to-day. It will please you to hear Mr. Conway is to try a few grains of James's Powder to-night.

I am affectionately yours,

C. A.

impression, and we are likely to experience whether fasting can expel the kind of devils by which we have been visited. Indeed I have many reasons for not disputing with you, I hate disputes. I have much higher opinion too of your abilities than of my own; and I suspect my own prejudices, and I know that persons who dispute, though with their friends, grow more angry with those they are angry with last, than with their enemies; as I see has happened to your York Association, which has wandered from the national cause to a county quarrel; and my last reason is that I despair. I think this country ruined: what may be saved from the general wreck, I do not know, perhaps shall not see. Mr. Hartley's system, had it been adopted, was in my eyes the best to have been pursued, I mean, all possible efforts to put an end to the American War. He has proved that the continuation is positive destruction, any piddling may amuse, or turn attention aside, but in this age of the world to arm a stripling with a sling and a pebble will not fell a giant; but why be metaphoric? ruin comes on with strides. Russia has sent us a thundering monitory: and probably we shall soon be at war with the whole Armed Neutrality, which, like idiots, we imagined meant no more than neutral armament; well, I shall not be very sorry if all Europe combined compels us to make peace. I long to be able to die in quiet: we shall be but a little brow-beaten island, and as *that* is not the England in which I was born, I must be excused if I do not care about it.

I have been and am still very unhappy about General Conway. With a broken arm he embarked in a storm for Jersey at a moment's warning. He could not mount the ladder of the frigate; a sailor gave him a tug and wrenched that very arm. For two days and nights he was tossed in a furious tempest, could not reach his island, and at last was thrown on Plymouth. He returned quite lame again, with a fever from pain and a violent rheumatism from cold, and has kept his bed almost ever since. His last year's speech has just been published. Woodfall sent him word that he had notes of it and was going to print it, on which Mr. Conway thought it better to give him his own notes. I like much of it, though he and I do not agree in his sentiments about the recovery of America: for though I do not love to dispute, especially with my best friends, I cannot give up my opinions, if they are my opinions; but then I do not maintain that I must be in the right, except in judging for myself, and that leave which I take, I should be very absurd, nay, very impertinent, if I did not allow, but alas! he and you and I might as well be disputing

about the time of keeping Easter: I most gladly turn away from politics to other matters.

Mr. Gilpin has sent me his book and dedication. I thank you for the latter being so moderate, yet he talks of my researches, which makes me smile; I know, as Gray would have said, how little I have *researched*, and what slender pretensions are mine to so pompous a term. *A-propos* to Gray, 'Johnson's Life,' or rather criticism on his Odes, is come out; a most wretched, dull, tasteless, *verbal* criticism, —yet, timid too. But he makes amends, he admires Thomson and Akenside, and Sir Richard Blackmore, and has reprinted Dennis's 'Criticism on Cato,' to save time and swell his pay. In short, as usual, he has proved that he has no more ear than taste. Mrs. Montagu and all her Mænades intend to tear him limb from limb for despising their moppet Lord Lyttelton.

You will be diverted to hear that Mr. Gibbon has quarrelled with me. He lent me his second volume in the middle of November. I returned it with a most civil panegyric. He came for more incense, I gave it, but alas! with too much sincerity; I added, "Mr. Gibbon, I am sorry *you* should have pitched on so disgusting a subject as the Constantinopolitan History. There is so much of the Arians and Eunomians, and semi-Pelagians; and there is such a strange contrast between Roman and Gothic manners, and so little harmony between a Consul Sabinus and a Ricimer, Duke of the palace, that though you have written the story as well as it could be written, I fear few will have patience to read it." He coloured; all his round features squeezed themselves into sharp angles; he screwed up his button-mouth, and rapping his snuff-box,[1] said, "It had never been put together before"—*so well* he meant to add—but gulped it. He meant *so well* certainly, for Tillemont, whom he quotes in every page, has done the very thing. Well, from that hour to this I have never seen him, though he used to call once or twice a week; nor has sent me the third volume, as he promised. I well knew his vanity, even about his ridiculous face and person, but thought he had too much sense to avow it so palpably. The 'History' is admirably written, especially in the characters of Julian and Athanasius, in both which he has piqued himself on impartiality—but the style is far less

[1] Soon as to Brooks's thence thy footsteps bend,
What gratulations thy approach attend!
See Gibbon rap his box; auspicious sign,
That classic compliment and wit combine.
R. Tickell—Fox to Townshend, 1780.—CUNNINGHAM.

sedulously enamelled than the first volume, and there is flattery to the Scots that would choke anything but Scots, who can gobble feathers as readily as thistles. David Hume and Adam Smith are *legislators* and sages, but the homage is intended for his patron, Lord Loughborough.[1]

So much for literature and its fops! except what interests me a thousand times more, and which I kept for the *bonne bouche*, your 'Fresnoy' and 4th 'Garden;' I shall certainly ask for the former the instant I return (for I go to-morrow to Park-place, to see Mr. Conway, who cannot yet get to town), but not to interfere a moment with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who will execute his task so well. I long too for the 'Garden'—I beg to recommend a note to you; last year a man at Turnham Green fixed up a board with this notice—*Ready made Temples sold here.* I would put over the convocation, *Ready made Priests sold here.* The Turnhamite now sells only curricles and whiskys.

If my Gazette is long, remember you ordered me to amuse Mr. Palgrave. I am glad you have him, and will do anything I can to fix him with you; pray assure him how much I am his. I can say no more, for I have not left half room to thank you for your very kind promise of coming to me in the spring. It amply compensates my disappointment of seeing you here; here I only get a snatch of you for an instant; no where I have enough of you. And which I lament more, for I am not selfish, the World has not enough of you —you know what I mean.

2001. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 31, *at night,* 1781.

It is not to save myself, I assure your Ladyship, that I decline writing when Lord Ossory is in town. I do write when he is not, because I am aware that any intelligence, that is not quite bad, and that takes care not to be false, is acceptable in the country. But when our Lord is here, and hears all that passes in Parliament, and at Brooks's, how chilled must sound the little that I learn in my own room, or in the small circle to which my acquaintance is

[1] Gibbon's letter to Lord Loughborough on his being made Lord High Chancellor is printed for the first time in Lord Campbell's 'Life of Lord Loughborough.' Lord Sheffield was unable to obtain Lord Loughborough's permission to print it.—Cunningham.

reduced, or to which I have reduced it! I go little into the fashionable world, and less among politicians of either side; and to no public places: and of the young world, except of my own family, I determine to know nothing; or, if I cannot help it, to say nothing One of the *reigning* topics (I have improperly used almost a treasonable word) is the Prince of Wales. With him I am positive never to occupy myself. I kissed the hand of his great great-grandfather; would not it be preposterous to tap a volume of future history, of which I can never see but the first pages? I am sensible that those persons are happier, who do not feel what is improper for their age; but having always had a horror for juvenile ancientry, I will not make an exception in my own favour; nor should have any comfort in it. It is an absurd saying, that none know themselves; what the deuce then do they know? Do they think they bound, when they totter, or mistake wrinkles for beauty, and want of memory for thoughtlessness?

I have had another cause of silence, too, Madam; I have been at Park-place to see General Conway. I suspected he was worse than I was told, and found he had been much worse than I suspected. He still has fever, and still rheumatism; his hands are swelled, and his face and legs emaciated; nor has he yet been out of his bedchamber. In short, he is much broken, and I doubt will be long before he recovers his strength. I came back but to-day to attend the Princess, and know absolutely nothing. I believe there is nothing new, for the Duchess of Bedford was there. Oh! yes, Captain Waldegrave has taken some rich Dutch prizes, for which I am very glad, as I like him much, and his cousins love him extremely.

Thank your Ladyship for the account of Sir Walter Raleigh's and his wife's pictures, but I shall not meddle with them. I have neither room nor money for more purchases. The Stocks are so terribly fallen, that what trifles I have saved *from myself* for others, would not now pay the legacies I have given; and I must endeavour, if I live, to hoard the deficiency. This is an uncomfortable reflection, but who that reflects, has not some such to make? The nation, like a great boy, does not allow itself a moment's thought. It engages every day to support new wars, though it cannot manage one of them; ere long, to use the sublime nonsense of a Secretary of State, *it will be stunned into its senses;* but what good will its senses do then? This was a letter of obedience, but, I fear, ill-conducted to enliven your solitude.

2002. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 3, 1781.

With Mr. Palgrave's leave I will answer the essential parts of your letter before I attend to his entertainment, for which I am poorly qualified at present.

I have not Dr. Johnson's 'Lives:' I made a conscience of not buying them. However, having a mind to be possessed of these last volumes (I never even dipped into their predecessors), I inquired if I could buy the 'Lives' separately from the edition of the Poems; no, the whole are sixty volumes. My purse made a conscience of laying out so much money for criticisms I despise, and for bodies of poetry that I never shall read again, and printed in so small a type that I could not read them if I would. I will try if I can borrow Gray's 'Life' for you, and will send it with Mr. Conway's pamphlet, and will consult Mr. Stonhewer. I think you will not deem the dull comment on Gray worth your notice; if you do, pray do not forget Soame Jenyns's 'Ode' that is levelled at you both.

You oblige me infinitely by your concern for Mr. Conway. I left him better, or should not have left him, and had a still better account last night; yet this last shock on the neck of another has broken him exceedingly, and I doubt he will be long before he masters it. He is indeed far too virtuous for the times, yet they are such times that show such men! You will marvel to hear that on Thursday there was so large a minority as 149 on Charles Fox's motion for censuring the preferment of Palliser, but there were 214 that applauded it, particularly Governor Johnston, for with or without a *t*, that is a detestable name, and a corrupt one; I would as soon be a Macgregor.

The Stocks believe that there is another rough rescript come from Russia, but though money is the only deity in vogue, the greatest bigots do not mind their own oracle.

I have told you all I know,—so little, that I fear Mr. Palgrave would not stay five minutes if you have no better a correspondent. What can I do? Oh! I will tell him a story. It is true, mine are not so long as Schehezarade's, but if he is as easily amused as Shah Baham, of ever-hearing memory, I will answer as far as half a dozen go, to tell him as improbable tales as any in the 'Arabian Nights,' or in the newspapers; yet the one I select is not of that kind, nor,

unluckily, new to you; but when great personages of old ordered their fools to divert their guests, I fear they were forced to hear the repetition of stale jokes—ay, and I will warrant, laughed heartily at them again and again, as their successors might do now. Raspe's book goes on but slowly, I know not why; you shall have it the instant it is finished. It is not published by subscription. I am at the expense, and am to pay myself by the sale, if I can, which I doubt will not happen, for my own last volume of 'Painters' does not go off.

Mr. Gilpin tells me, on my moving him to publish the charming book you showed me, that he would try aquatinta, if he could learn the secret; I shall consult Sandby—nay, I believe it is no longer a secret.

Mr. Warton's third volume is advertised for the end of this month, and Kate Macgraham [Mrs. Macaulay] has published two more; yet does not advance beyond the death of Algernon Sidney. I believe England will be finished before her 'History.'

On Monday is to commence Lord George Gordon's trial, which, I suppose, will obliterate Holland and Russia and everything else, even Vestris. If I hear any circumstances worth telling you and not in the newspapers, you shall know them directly, but it is difficult to anticipate the daily chronicles. Adieu!

P.S. Have you heard that your Archbishop [Markham] went to the India House to vote for Benfield? Don't tell me that there is no Metempsychosis. I am sure Dr. Markham was in Peru when the inhabitants were broiled to make them discover their gold, and held a crucifix in his hand. His Grace was going to take the oath with his beaver on; the clerk humbly remonstrated, and he took it off, which was surprising, for perhaps cardinals swear covered; and when he supported Lord Pigot's deposer, methinks his hat looked very red.

Lord Harcourt has just been here, and tells me he believes he can procure the method of the aquatinta for Mr. Gilpin.

2003. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Monday noon, Feb. 5, 1781.

Perhaps you think, by my letters riding on the back of one another, that I am going to tell you of my Lord George Gordon. No, poor soul! he is at this minute in Westminster Hall, and I know nothing about him. Somehow or other I dare to say the Constitution will be brought in guilty, for Lord Mansfield is the judge. But I have other guess things to say to you: I have got your 'Fresnoy;'[1] it is a new proof of what I have long thought, that there is nothing you cannot do if you please. This is the best translation I ever saw; there have been disputes between literal and paraphrastic translations, and no wonder, for a third sort, the true was not known; yours preserves the sense and substance of every sentence, but you make a new arrangement, and state and express the author's thought better than he could. Horace would have excused you if you had been simply familiar in a didactic poem, but you would not be so excused, nor allow yourself negligence in your poetry. You have exchanged the poverty of Fresnoy's Latin for Pope's rich English, and every epithet contributes its quota to every precept and developes it. This is in the style of none of your other works, and though more difficult, as masterly as any: in short, I have examined it with admiration, and only wonder how, with such powers and knowledge of the subject, you could confine yourself to the *matter* of the original. The shackles of translation have neither cramped your style, nor rendered it obscure; you have enriched your author without deviating, and improved his matter without adding to it, which is an achievement indeed. I do not flatter you; nay, you know I am frank enough upon most occasions, and were I porter of the Temple of Fame, I would not open the door to one of your babes, if it was not like you.

I think I shall soon compass a transcript at least of Gray's 'Life by Demogorgon' [Dr. Johnson] for you. I saw him last night at Lady Lucan's, who had assembled a *blue stocking* meeting in imitation of Mrs. Vesey's Babels. It was so blue, it was quite Mazarine-blue. Mrs. Montagu kept aloof from Johnson, like the

[1] "I have heard no opinions on Fresnoy yet, but favourable ones. I could wish, myself, some few lines in the 'Epistle to Sir Joshua' a little mended. Can't you get rid of that word 'coin?'" *MS. Letter of Wm. Whitehead,* 1783.—Mitford.

West from the East. There were Soame Jenyns, *Persian* Jones, Mr. Sherlocke, the new court with Mr. Courtenay,[1] besides the out-pensioners of Parnassus. Mr. Wraxall[2] was not, I wonder why, and so will he, for he is popping into every spot where he can make himself talked of, by talking of himself; but I hear he will come to an untimely beginning in the House of Commons.

I shall return your 'Fresnoy' as soon as I have gone through it once more, that Sir Joshua may go to work. I have proposed a subject to him that he seems to like; *little children brought to Christ.* He will not make them all brothers, like Albano's Cupids.

Pray look into the last 'Critical Review' but one; there you will find that David Hume in a saucy blockheadly note calls Locke, Algernon Sidney, and Bishop Hoadly, *despicable writers.* I believe that ere long the Scotch will call the English *lousy!* and that Goody Hunter will broach the assertion in an Anatomic lecture. Not content with debasing and disgracing us as a nation by losing America, destroying our Empire, and making us the scorn and prey of Europe, the Scotch would annihilate our patriots, martyrs, heroes, and geniuses. Algernon Sidney, Lord Russell, King William, the Duke of Marlborough, Locke, are to be traduced and levelled, and with the aid of their fellow-labourer Johnson, who spits at them while he tugs at the same oar, Milton, Addison, Prior, and Gray are to make way for the dull forgeries of Ossian, and such wights as Davy, and Johnny Home, Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, and Adam Smith!—Oh! if you have a drop of English ink in your veins, rouse and revenge your country! Do not let us be run down and brazened out of all our virtue, genius, sense, and taste, by Laplanders and Bœotians, who never produced one original writer in verse or prose.

Tuesday morning.

My servants tell me, for I have yet seen nobody else to-day, that Lord George was acquitted at five this morning—a wise manœuvre truly has been made; they punish him severely for eight months, and cannot convict him! now he will be a confessor. I must finish, for I have just heard that Lady Orford is dead, and must write to my family and order mourning, &c. I doubt this letter is no retaining fee to Mr. Palgrave.

[1] John Courtenay, author of the 'Poetical Review of Dr. Johnson's Character;' born in Ireland, 1738; died, 1815.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Afterwards Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall, Bart., and not unfavourably known by his 'Memoirs of his Own Time.'—CUNNINGHAM.

2004. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 6, 1731.

Last night, when I came home, I found your two letters of January 13th and 16th; the one to prepare me for, and the second to announce, Lady Orford's death. It has been reported here for a fortnight that she was dead: so, perhaps, somebody sent a courier to her son, or to Sharpe her lawyer; or, more probably, her heir might send one to Hoare. I have nothing to do with all that; but I have this minute written to her son, and sent him the individual copy of her Will that I have received from you, and the few particulars you have told me.

My first reflection naturally is, that, had my Lord had patience *but for a year*, he would have had no occasion to sell his pictures; supposing which, I do not think that, without his mother's death, he would have had *that* occasion. My own opinion is, that the wretches round him precipitated the sale, as money is more purloinable than a palace of pictures.

By the Will it seems her Ladyship claims no power over her landed estates in England, though I have heard that she pretended to have a right to dispose of part: but all that is nothing to me.

I have no public news to add but what I scarce know yet, the trial of Lord George Gordon. It was yesterday, and they say he was *acquitted* at five this morning; but this I have learnt only from my servants, for I have been writing to notify my Lady Orford's death to my relations, that they may mourn, and bespeaking mourning, and doing such necessary things; and have seen nobody yet, and, in fact, did not care a straw about my Lord George any more than, when any living creature is trying for his life, I feel at the moment, and wish him to escape.

END OF VOL. VII.

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